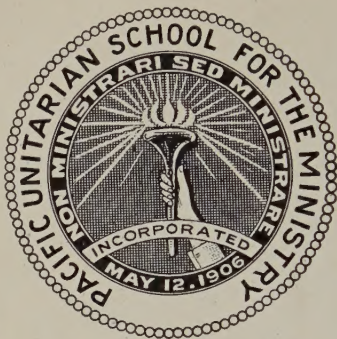




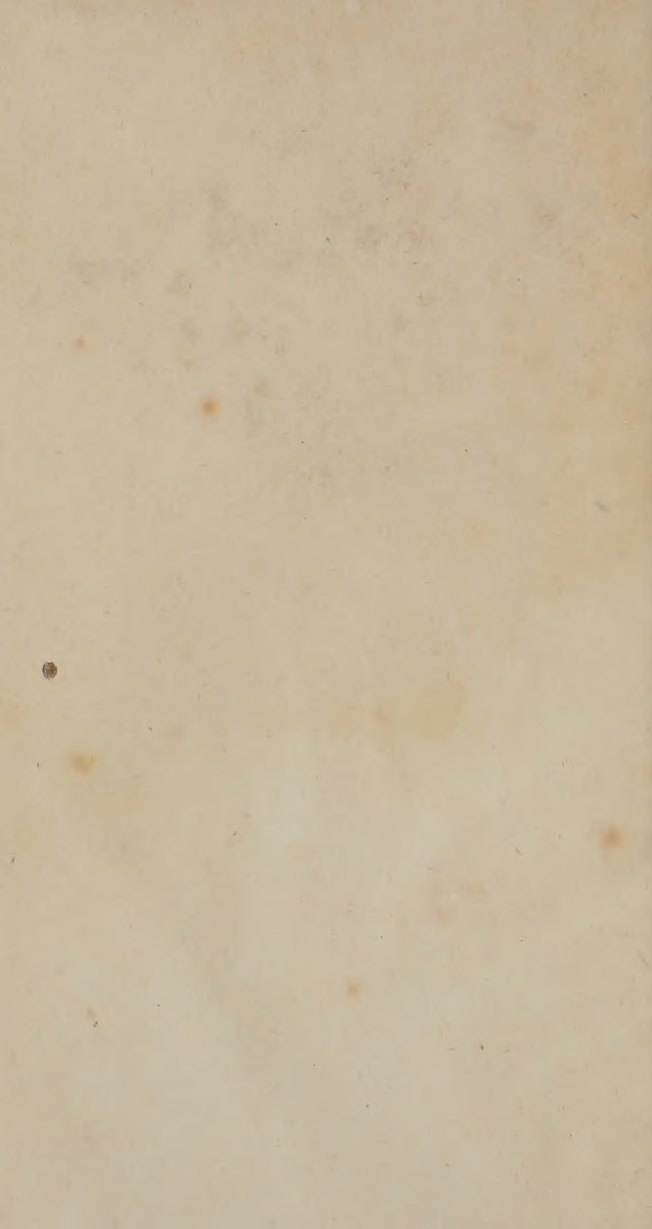


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THE
Bible Christian:

DESIGNED TO AFFORD

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SUPREMACY OF SCRIPTURE

AND THE

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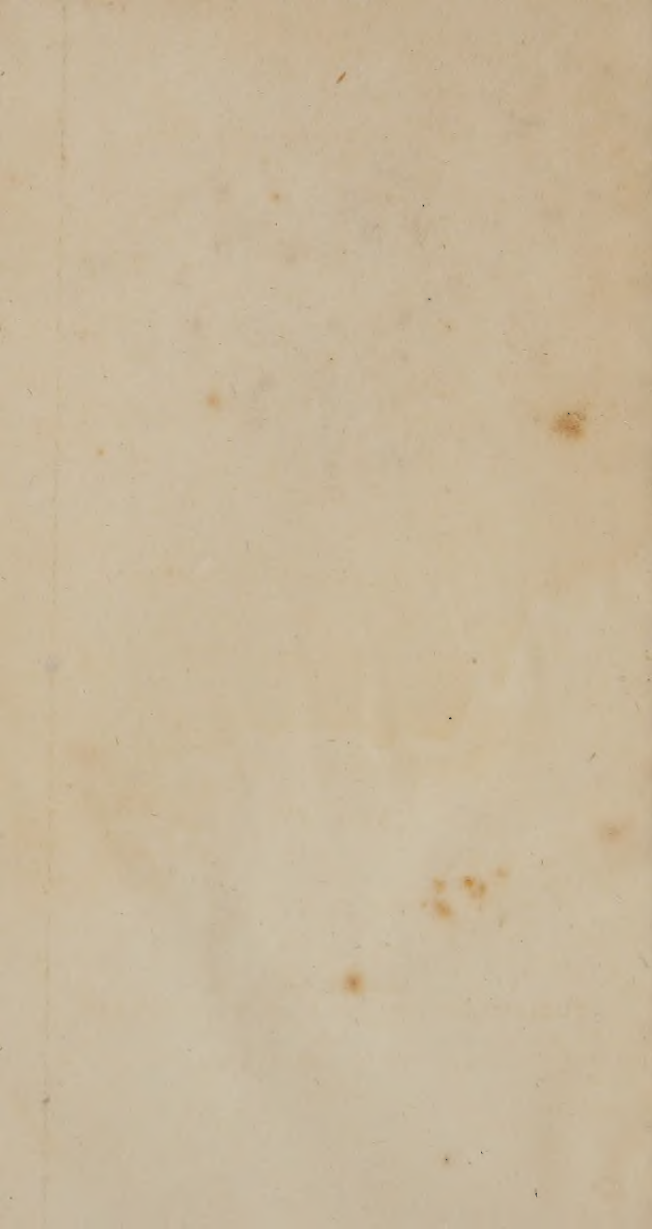
IN MATTERS OF FAITH.

VOL. IV.

BY J. C. H. H.

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[FOR THE BIBLE CHRISTIAN.]

JACOB AND JOSEPH.*

THE object of this paper is to recommend some incidents in the early life of Joseph to the consideration of parents and children.

The first circumstance relative to Joseph which we find recorded, is, that he was sent with the rest of his brethren to feed his father's flocks, and that when he returned, he brought unto his father their evil report. It is possible, that this report concerning the misbehaviour of his brethren, may have been made with a malicious design, in consequence either of a quarrel between him and his brothers, or of a settled plan to undermine them in his father's affections. But it is more probable, both from his undesigning age, being only seventeen years old, and also from his general character, that this information was given without any intention that his father should deduce from it conclusions to the disadvantage of his children, and perhaps without knowing or even suspecting that any such conclusion could be drawn from it. His conduct was directed only by the loquacity of youth, and a desire of gratifying a fond and indulgent parent by communicating what had passed during their separation. He knew not what different colours the same transaction wears, when viewed by the cheerful and glancing eye of youthful gaiety and brotherly love, on the one hand, and on the other, by the austere, suspicious, and penetrating eye of age, assisted by the anxiety of a parent. What seemed to the youth to be only an innocent frolic, might to the patriarch appear a licentious and contemptuous disobedience to parental authority. Joseph considered the inquiries of his father, as made merely for the pleasure of hearing how plea-

* For Esau, see page 531.

santly they had passed their time, how they had escaped the dangers of the desert, and defended themselves from the assaults of robbers, and their flocks from the ferocity of wild beasts ; when perhaps every question was asked with the gloomy suspicion of an inquisitor, or prompted by the jealous fears of avarice, and the peevishness consequent upon a painful distemper, and extreme old age. And how can we blame the youth for being taken in such a snare ? How indeed was he to extricate himself from the dilemma of his situation ? He must either refuse his confidence to his father, or violate that which had been reposed in him by his brethren. He must either by his silence forfeit the affection of a parent, or lose the esteem of his brothers by telling the truth. Perhaps he chose the most eligible part ; he trusted to the wisdom of age, that it would not abuse the confidence of youth. And yet in this we find he was mistaken.

Jacob, among his other failings, seems to have been a most injudicious governor of his family. This observation we shall have occasion to refer to more than once before we dismiss the subject : for the misfortune which befel his favourite son, and the frantic sorrow with which they afflicted himself, were the consequence only of his own unjust partiality to Joseph, and consequent injustice to the rest of his children. In the instance under consideration we have reason to think that he made a very unfair and imprudent use of the information he had extorted or stolen from the unsuspecting confidence of Joseph. For the evil report made by Joseph to their father, would never have operated as a cause of discontent, except he with equal and less pardonable imprudence, had made an improper use of what he had gleaned from Joseph, and even betrayed the source of his information.

This is a striking example of the danger and imprudence of employing one child as a spy upon the rest, or making such use of any information derived from that quarter as will make him appear to his brethren to have betrayed their secrets. To make this use of such information is to sacrifice the peace and harmony of a family to the correction of a single, and probably, a trifling fault ; but to employ a child in such a manner, besides the dissolution of every bond of natural affection, is to educate him for

the basest employments of life, and to prepare him for the perpetration of every most detestable crime. To vindicate this practice to an infant mind, as a part of filial duty, and an instance of filial obedience, is only to add the qualities of a hypocrite to the character of a traitor. A parent should make use of every other method of discovering the faults of his children, or even let every fault remain unpunished and unknown, rather than ruin the honesty and integrity of their minds for the sake of correcting their childish failings.

The very next sentence contains another cause of the misfortunes of Jacob's family, that is, another instance of his own folly. We are told, "that Israel loved Joseph more than all his brethren:" this was very pardonable, you will say: perhaps he was more worthy of his affection; perhaps he stood more in need of his protection on account of his extreme youth: and even supposing this not to be the case, no man is able to control, at all times, the current of his affections. They, like our passions, govern us oftener than we govern them. Love is rather excited by very trifling qualifications, by an insinuating address, minute attentions, and a thousand nameless trifles, than by the respectable qualities of the understanding, or even the worthy dispositions of the heart. Not a word of this defence will apply to Jacob: he did not love Joseph for his captivating address, and dutiful attention, for his youthful wants, which instinctively call forth the affection of a parent, nor yet for the innocence and purity of his mind: "he loved him more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age." When he found this predilection, this irrational and unjust preference, taking possession of his heart, a wise man would have striven to conceal it, at least from his children, lest he should endanger the peace of his family by estranging their affections from himself, and exasperating them all against his favourite son. But how did Jacob behave? He published his partiality to the whole house in the most invidious manner he could possibly devise. As he loved Joseph more than all his children, for the most childish reason that ever influenced a fond parent, so he took the most childish method of publishing this to those very persons from whom he should have concealed it with the

greatest care. "He made him a coat of many colours." He hung it out as a signal of domestic dissention, discord, and uproar; he declared war against all his children, and forced his innocent and favourite son into the quarrel. He obliged him to exchange the affection of his brethren, the sweets of mutual confidence, the advantages arising from the advice and protection of his elder brothers, and the numberless sweets of domestic friendship and brotherly love, for hate and contempt, and envy, and a coat of many colours. This seems to be a fair statement of the favours conferred on a child by that parent who indulges a partial and unjust attachment for him. Children consider the affection of a parent as a joint stock in which they have all an equal interest; and when none of them has forfeited his share, they are certainly right. No one child has any reason to complain, or indeed ever once thinks of complaining, that he is not the favourite; but they have all reason to murmur, and generally exert this privilege, if one be singled from the rest. The causes of this partiality, (I cannot call them reasons,—they have no affinity to reason)—are generally of the most whimsical kind, and are often founded in cruelty and injustice; thus, one child is hated for weakness of understanding or deformity of person, and for other circumstances which throw the unfortunate infant on the affection of the parent, and therefore ought to excite parental tenderness: another is beloved for qualities which often indicate an unsociable disposition, for beauty of person, or for being the child of old age—his brethren generally retort this injustice of the parent on the favourite. As the guilty is above their influence or power, they revenge themselves upon their equal; and how can we blame the injustice of the revenge, when it is so much extenuated by comparison with the folly and injustice of the parent. Agreeably to this and to what we all know to be the operation of human nature, we are told, that 'when Joseph's brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him.'

The next cause of the distraction which took place in the household of the patriarch, was a circumstance which would probably have passed unnoticed, had it not been

connected with other particulars already mentioned, or if their minds had not been previously irritated and provoked. Alone it would have had little weight, but was of great consequence as an addition, and was able to weigh down a sinking scale. Joseph dreamed two dreams, the natural interpretation of which seemed to insinuate, that he was to rise to a state of power and splendour, greatly superior to the rest of his family, and that not only his brethren but even his father and mother should make obeisance before him. It is not plain, whether those dreams were the mere fortuitous combinations of ideas which float about in the imagination of the sleeping man, for which in his waking hours he is not at all accountable, as they have no connexion with his waking thoughts; or whether they were only the repetition of those proud and insolent projects in which he indulged during the day, or whether they were the prophetic whispers of a supernatural power. If these airy visions were the consequence of his waking thoughts, these thoughts were the consequence of the flattery and partial indulgence of his father; and if he had suffered his airy castles to be concealed in the obscurity of night, it is no great matter where their foundations were laid. The circumstance which rendered his dreams worthy of notice, is that he not only dreamed a dream, but also told it to his brethren and to his father. He had hitherto suffered in the estimation of his brethren, chiefly by the folly of others; but the foolish education he had received began now to operate upon his mind, and to make him the instrument of evil to himself. For the effect of his telling his dreams was, that his brethren hated him yet the more: and even his father was not pleased at his own work, and said, ‘what is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother, and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?’ His brethren envied him; but though his father was displeased, he noted and observed the prophetic saying.

So far, we have seen the folly and pernicious nature of that education, which even Jacob, a man of experience and abilities, gave his favourite son; and that modern parents are often guilty of the same faults is

too well known to be doubted. If any thing further is necessary, it is to relate the consequences of this practice; and with a relation of these in the case of Joseph we are also furnished by Moses. They were such, as to make every parent tremble for the consequence, as soon as he suspects that he is guilty of this unwise and unjust partiality.

It is natural to suppose, that Joseph's elder brothers beheld him with the same partiality and affection which is generally found among such near relations. Some of them were men of abilities and humanity. His imprudence in giving his father an account of some irregularities, which they had committed during their absence from home, would be easily pardoned. If indeed they suspected him of a design to supplant them in their father's affections, the offence would be considered in a very serious light; but if it was only an effusion of youthful gaiety and frankness, a suitable apology would easily produce his pardon. But the partial and unjust predilection which appeared in their father's conduct must not only have roused their jealousy, but also revived the embers of their old suspicions. A continuance of this partiality, the coat of many colours, and the neglect with which they were treated by their father, raised their resentment against the cause of it to a high degree of acrimony and exasperation. But when to all this was added the presumption and ambition of Joseph, their younger brother, manifested by his insolent declarations that they should all one day bow down to the ground before him, nothing further was necessary to complete this detestation of the haughty favourite. The only bounds set to their resentment were sullen silence both to their father and each other. The aged patriarch never suspected the storm of tumultuous passions that raged in his children's breasts, and shook the corners of his house. It took its rise from his own faults, and therefore *he* was the last to observe its existence or to divine its cause. While their tempers were in this state, he dispatched his sons upon a second expedition. When they had consumed the fodder about his dwelling, he ordered them to drive his flocks to unexhausted pastures; he sent them all except his favourite son and his infant

brother. At length, wishing to hear from his children, he ordered Joseph to go to his brethren and bring an account of their welfare, and of the state of the flocks. Joseph immediately set out on his journey, inspired with the ardour of youth, animated with a desire of gratifying an indulgent parent, and delighted with the prospect of meeting his brethren. "From the vale of Hebron he proceeded to Schechem. And a certain man found him, and behold he was wandering in the field; and the man asked him, saying, What seekest thou? And he said, I seek my brethren: tell me, I pray thee, where they feed their flocks. And the man said, They are departed hence; for I heard them say, let us go to Dothan. And Joseph went after his brethren and found them in Dothan." When they saw him at a distance, every circumstance of his behaviour and of their father's injustice rushed into their minds: perhaps this had been the subject of their conversation from the time that they were freed from the restraint of their father's presence. It would naturally occur to their jealous, exasperated minds, that he was sent as a spy, and was going to repeat the breach of faith and brotherly love which had originally alienated their affections from him. 'They said one to another, behold, this dreamer cometh. Come now, let us slay him and cast him into some pit, and we will say some evil beast hath devoured him; and we then shall see what will become of his dreams.' If any of them felt compunction and reluctance to stain their hands with a brother's blood, it was removed as soon as he came near, for he was clad in the coat of many colours. The influence of his tears and prayers was counter-balanced by this token of his pride, and of Jacob's partial and injurious behaviour. The greatest mitigation of this cruel sentence that could be obtained, either by his own prayers or the intercession of one of his brothers, who had more humanity than the rest, was, that he was cast into a pit. From this dismal prison into which he had been thrown by the cruelty, he was extricated only by the avarice of his brothers. He was sold to a caravan of merchants, carrying goods to Egypt.* Instead of return-

* "Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen, and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmae-

ing a beloved son to the house of his father, he was carried a wretched slave into a foreign land. And Jacob, instead of meeting his favourite, and hearing from his lips good tidings of the remainder of his children, was presented with the coat of many colours, torn as by the jaws of a lion, and besmeared with blood. "For they had killed a kid, and dipped the coat in the blood, and then exhibited it to their father with these unfeeling and taunting terms. Lo! this have we found: know now whether it be thy son's coat or no." "He knew the coat, and said, it is my son's coat; Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces; an evil beast hath devoured him. And he refused to be comforted and said, I will go down to the grave unto my son mourning." Thus his father wept for him, and thus concludes a tale, I hope, not destitute of instruction, nor unprofitably called to mind; a tale applicable to every family, and giving warning to every age, to the child as well as to the parent. Jacob wept for the loss of his son; but he did not weep for his own folly. This circumstance indeed is more observable in the failing under consideration than in any other, that the parent never suspects himself of any undue bias; but with perfect unconcern joins in the general censure and in blaming the folly of others; he wonders how any parent can be so unjust and blind, whilst his hearers find no cause of wonder equal to this, that he never applies to his own use those observations which he so liberally bestows upon others. I therefore would exhort my readers to beware, lest they accumulate for themselves a load of sorrow. The best of their favourites will assuredly grow worse by indulgence, and the worst of their children by neglect. The best will stand in need of admonition; and none can deserve to be deprived of parental protection and advice.

Let them remember the follies by which Jacob mingled for himself a bitter cup; the imprudent and ungenerous use he made of the frankness of one child to the detriment of the rest; and let them not suffer or encourage

lites for twenty pieces of silver; and they brought Joseph into Egypt." (These were kindred and neighbouring tribes descended from two sons of Abraham, forming one caravan for mutual defence in traversing the desert.)

any of them to think he can earn their favour by betraying the secrets of their brethren; nor even make use of such information, though it should be learned by accident. On such occasions let them call to mind the childish reason which betrayed the wise and venerable patriarch into this folly, and weigh their children's merits in a just and even balance. Let them remember the coat of many colours; and beware of spreading jealousy and disgust among their innocent, though frail and passionate offspring. And reflect upon the consequence of these reiterated errors—the confusion and distraction of families, the dissolution of brotherly love, and the most direful effects that can proceed from violent and acrimonious passion.

ERASMUS.

BULL'S DEFENCE OF THE NICENE CREED.

I yet remember the delight with which I first found myself seated at my table, with this celebrated work before me. I had for some time been engaged in a course of reading, with the object of making myself acquainted with the arguments most frequently advanced, and most confidently relied on, by the trinitarian writers. I had perceived that while most of the authors whom I consulted adhered to the same form of words in the expression of their opinions, there often lurked under this seeming agreement, a very distinct diversity of faith on several important points, essential, as I thought, to their own doctrine. An argument advanced by one with the greatest air of assurance, was repudiated by another as utterly untenable; an explanation suggested by the latter was rejected by a third as inadequate and unsatisfactory. But while I observed this marked diversity in their sentiments and reasonings, I had been much struck with the unanimity which prevailed among them, respecting the merits and importance of Bull's Defence of the Nicene Creed. To procure this *standard work* soon became with me an object of much interest; and accident having thrown it in my way while engaged in rummaging the contents of a library, I set myself down to the perusal of it with all the zeal and alacrity possible. "Here then," I said to myself, "I have at last obtained what I have so long desired; a

Defence of the Doctrine of the Trinity, to which all modern trinitarians bear harmonious testimony. Here I may expect to find the proofs and explanations of that doctrine, fully stated, arranged in the most lucid order, and expressed with the most persuasive perspicuity."

In the last of these particulars I was disappointed. To the circumstances which caused Bull to appear to me less likely to produce conviction than some other writers of far inferior note, I shall advert hereafter. In the mean time, it is but justice to characterise the Defence of the Nicene Faith, as the able production of a very able and laborious man. Indeed his industry and patience in research, and the extent of his acquirements, are truly wonderful. His failure therefore, for I think he has failed utterly in establishing his point, is owing not to want of skill or learning in support of the arguments that he has brought forward; but to the nature of those arguments themselves. But to explain more precisely my objection to Bull's reasoning, it will be necessary to take a brief survey of his volume.

Bull begins by laying before his readers the genuine creed approved of by the Fathers at Nice; and of which *alone*, he undertakes the defence. As this *genuine* symbol differs in several points from the Nicene Creed as set forth in the liturgies of the Roman and English churches, I shall translate it for the benefit of the reader.

"We believe in One God, the Father, Almighty, Maker of all both of the visible and invisible: AND in the One Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God; the only Son begotten of the Father, that is, of the substance of the Father; God from God, light from light, true God from true God: begotten, not made: consubstantial with the Father; through whom all things were made, both in Heaven and upon earth: who for us men and for our salvation, descended, was incarnate, became man, suffered, rose again on the third day, and ascended into Heaven; and who cometh to judge the living and the dead: AND in the Holy Spirit. And those who say of the Son of God, that there was a time when he was not; and that before he was begotten, he did not exist; and that he was made out of nothing; or who assert that he was of another substance or essence, or created, or converted or changed, these persons the Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematizes."

It is no part of my present object to trace historically the alterations which have successively been introduced into this symbol. It will be sufficient to call the atten-

tion to the fact, that this, the original and genuine document as given by cotemporary historians, is silent upon the doctrines of the Deity, the procession, and even upon the Personality of the Holy Spirit. These doctrines then had either not been broached at the time; or were not generally received by the Synod of Nice, or were not held to be of vital importance. This last supposition is not very probable. The chances therefore are, that the Deity and Personality of the Holy Spirit, were at the time of the Synod of Nice, either altogether unknown or very partially embraced. There is a contradiction in the creed, between the accounts given of the Father and the Son. Under the former head it is said that the Father is "*the Maker of all, both of the visible and of the invisible:*" under the latter, that the Son, who was undoubtedly visible, was not made but begotten.

After giving the symbol, Bull proceeds to specify under different heads the various points of doctrine which it contains, respecting the Son of God. These he says are as follows.

"1. The Pre-existence of the Son, before the blessed Virgin, and before the foundation of the world: and the Creation of this Universe by means of (*per.*) the Son.

"2. The Consubstantiality of the Son: that he is not of any created and mutable essence: but of a nature perfectly the same with the Father, that is, true God.

"3. The co-eternity of the Son with the Father.

"4. The subordination of the Son to the Father as the author and beginning of himself: which is expressed, says Bull, by the Nicene Fathers in two ways: 1st, they call the Father, *the one God*; 2dly, they describe the Son as *God from God, Light from light, &c.*"

Bull admits that there are some ancient authorities against the use of the term Consubstantial, as applied to the Son of God. "The council of Antioch, which was held against Paulus Samosatenus about sixty years before that at Nice, expressly rejected that phrase." p. 29. He makes another important admission in his explanation of the 4th doctrine deduced from the creed; which, as we have seen, is that of the Son's subordination. I translate his own expressions literally, that it may be seen how closely they approach to the verge of the Unitarian heresy.

“‘*Light from light.*’ In these words the Fathers signify that the Son of God is begotten from God the Father, God from God, in the same manner as one light is kindled from another: not by the division or diminution of the Father’s essence; but by simple communication; as is, if we may borrow an illustration of so great a mystery from material objects, the communication of light from another light, without any division or diminution of it.”—B. p. 34.

This gives up the *self-existence* of the Son; and implies that there might be as many persons in the Deity as lights can be kindled from one flame.

But the most startling of Bull’s explanations of the doctrine of Nice, is that in which he discusses the meaning of the celebrated term, *homoïusian* or consubstantial. It is commonly understood to denote an absolute identity of essence between the Father and the Son; an identity so complete that it is heresy, if not eternal damnation, to attempt to distinguish the substance of the one from that of the other. But this celebrated writer gives a very different idea of its signification. I subjoin a literal version of his comment.

“By approved Greek writers, that is called *homoïusian* or consubstantial, which is of the same substance, essence or nature with another thing. Thus Porphyry, on abstinence from the flesh of animals, says, ‘if indeed the souls of animals are *homoïusian* or *consubstantial* with our own.’ In Aristotle we find it stated, that, ‘all the stars, are *homoïusian* or *consubstantial*.’ The author of a book intitled *Græcænic Questions to the Christians*, found among the works of Justin, thus writes concerning the soul—‘we say that a rational soul is a spirit, endowed with understanding; vital, and capable of motion by itself, with which we say that both the angels and the dæmons are *consubstantial*,’ (or *homoïusian*). Lastly, Theodoret in his Dialogue, inscribed, ‘the Uncompounded,’ produces a passage from Apollinaris wherein he declares that ‘men are *homoïusian* or consubstantial with the brute creatures as to their irrational body; but *heterusian*, or of a different substance, in as far as they are rational.’

“Now, adds Bull, it will be plain to all impartial persons; to all who are not evidently men of a contentious disposition, that the Prelates at Nice, called the Son *homoïusian* or consubstantial with the Father in this very sense, and this will appear from the very words of their Creed itself.”

It is evident that there is nothing in the doctrine of Christ’s consubstantiality with the Father when thus explained, to which any of those who are commonly called Arians would feel disposed to object. The same may be said of his numerous confessions and statements

respecting the subordination of the Son of God. He says that "the Son has *received* all his authority from the Father;" and that it is most true that the Father is the only true God, if we speak with reference to that sovereign prerogative by virtue of which he alone is, of himself, true God."

I do not think it necessary to follow Bull into the arguments which he has brought forward in support of the doctrines of the Synod of Nice; because, with a very few exceptions, they are not derived from Scripture, but from the writings of the Fathers; and therefore are not likely to weigh much with the present generation of theologians. I do not think that there is more learning among divines at present than there was in the days of Bull; perhaps there is even less: but what there is, is of a better kind. Modern writers seem to be aware that in supporting their opinions, whatever these may be, their best weapons are those of Scripture and common sense; and that the declarations of the Fathers are not to be quoted as authorities for settling any question. In former times, the ancients were held in much greater estimation. Bull has been betrayed into several mistakes by an overweening admiration for them; and especially for the members of the council of Nice.

Although the manner in which Bull expresses himself respecting the claims of this Synod is not a little obscure, and perhaps designedly so, there can, I think, be no question that he wished his reader to infer that its decisions were guided and illuminated by the Holy Spirit in such a manner that its declarations are to be regarded as an intimation of the will of God. With seeming approbation he quotes a writer,* who says, that "although the members of the council were ignorant men, yet being illuminated by God and by the grace of the Holy Spirit, it was impossible for them to wander from the truth." On this he makes the following remark—"For Socrates seems to have apprehended that the enlightening grace of the Holy Spirit is always present in a really universal council of Bishops, and preserves them from error, at least in necessary points of faith. Which supposition if any one refuse to admit, &c." Now this is

* Socrates, the Ecclesiastical Historian.

an entire abandonment of every thing that is at issue between Protestants and Roman Catholics. Were an adroit controversialist of the Romish Communion to seize on this admission—to avail himself dexterously of the advantage which it offers; to quote the decisions of the councils of Chalcedon, Constantinople, &c., down to that at Trent, he could easily compel an adversary reasoning on the principles of Bull, to give up the doctrines of the Reformation as untenable and indefensible. I imagine it will now be admitted by all consistent Protestants that if the doctrines of the Nicene Creed require such concessions to support their authority, they are not worthy to stand, and must and will fall. Bull admits that this illuminating grace did not preserve the Prelates assembled at Nice—(of whom Eusebius says there were upwards of 250; Athanasius, Hilary, Jerome, Ruffin, and Socrates, 318)—from falling into violent disputes. “In the beginning of the council, there were no slight contentions between certain of the bishops; but these were soon and easily allayed by a pious and conciliatory speech of the Emperor.”—(§6.) It is to the authority of such men that Bull uniformly appeals. A few discussions upon texts of Scripture are sometimes introduced into his work; but only when they are suggested by something which occurs in the pages of his favourite fathers. It would be useless to analyse arguments which have long since been buried in oblivion; and which would ill repay the trouble of drawing them forth from that obscurity to which posterity has consigned them.

While we concede to Bull the merit of patience in research, we cannot give to him the praise of discrimination in the use of his authorities. It is impossible to read over the extracts which he has himself adduced from the writings of the Fathers, without perceiving that their language and their ideas on the relation between the Father and the Son, were almost always vague; and frequently what would now be considered heterodox. Bull has quoted with approbation several expressions which are plainly opposed to the doctrine that he was desirous of establishing. One of them is a dictum of Hermas: “*The Son of God is the Holy Spirit.*” This expression brings its author under the anathema denoun-

ced against those who “confound the persons” in the Trinity. The same remark applies to an assertion of Gregory of Nyssa. “The title of *Spirit*, and that of *Holy*, are attributed by the Scripture equally to the Father and the Son.” Bull himself admits that the Ante-nicene Fathers do not express themselves with sufficient accuracy on this point. “It is most certain,” he says, “that the son of God, the second person of the Deity, is every-where in the writings of the Fathers, denoted by the title, *Spirit*, *Spirit of God*, and *Holy Spirit*.” Def. Fid. Sec. I, c. 5. Surely it would have been easy for him to perceive how little dependence could be placed on the verbal correctness of writers, who if they agreed in opinion with himself, as he supposes they did, were capable of expressing themselves in what he must have considered so very loose, not to say, reprehensible a manner!

I shall give an example of the mode in which Bishop Bull handles a (supposed) scriptural argument, when any such happens to be suggested to him by the writings to which he commonly appeals.

Having quoted a passage from one of the fathers, in which reference is made to John i. 1. and to the term *logos* or *word* as therein employed, Bull endeavours to fortify the reasoning, by observing that the Chaldee paraphrasts, Philo, and the author of the Wisdom of Solomon, frequently employ the phrase, “the *logos*” or “*word of God*” to denote God himself. Hence Bull argues that in their writings, the *logos* is represented as a Divine Person, equal to the Father: and concludes that Christ is called *the logos* in the New Testament, expressly in order that men might perceive his proper divinity.

I stop not to analyse this reasoning; for I am able to shew that Bull by a subsequent admission entirely obviates its force. He says,—“To this it is no objection, that, as Grotius has observed, *the created angels themselves*, are universally spoken of under the name of *logos*; because they too are, in their own rank, messengers and interpreters of the divine will to mortals. For although *that is most true*,” &c.—Now there is no one who will not at the first glance see the absurdity of concluding that Jesus is God equal with the Father,

because he is called *logos*; a name which is confessedly assigned to *created beings*, who are the messengers and interpreters of the divine will. If this be true, and Bull says it is most true; ("*id verissimum est*,") then the application of the same term to Christ can prove no more than that he is also an agent of the Deity in making known his councils to mankind: that he is, "*pro suo modulo Divinæ voluntatis nuncius ad homines, et interpres*."

On the whole we may observe,

1. That the homoüsan doctrine as now maintained by the orthodox, is not that which is defended by bishop Bull. He argues that the Father and the Son are coessential, only in the same sense as the souls of different men are coessential; that is, are of a like nature, but not the same identical essence. He therefore falls under the anathema pronounced in the Athanasian Creed, on those who divide the substance.

2. That Bull expressly gives up the absolute and perfect equality of the Father and the Son; assigning to the former, supremacy in all the essential attributes of Deity.

3. That even this qualified orthodoxy, if such it may be called, he defends by quotations from the Fathers, with only a few short and casual references to the Scriptures.

And 4. that he supports the authority of the council and creed of Nice, in a manner so rash as implies the sacrifice of the fundamental principles of Protestantism.

R.

[FOR THE BIBLE CHRISTIAN.]

ON CHARACTER.

THE praise of men, though always subordinate to the approbation of God, is not to be utterly despised: much less is our disregard of the opinion of the world to be indiscriminate. Our sentiments concerning our own conduct should be always corrected by our knowledge of the will of God; but with respect to the opinion of mankind, it should sometimes control the convictions of our own minds, and sometimes give way to them. The impartial, well digested moral conclusions of our own hearts should seldom be surrendered to hu-

man authority : but as we are not always certain of the impartiality or wisdom of our convictions, a modest man will be ready to give a fair hearing to the opinion of the world : and in estimating the degree of deference due to the sentiments of others concerning his own character, he will be obliged to form some estimate of theirs. He will neither yield an indiscriminate assent to their decisions, nor treat them all with undistinguishing neglect : but will endeavour to ascertain the respect due to those who censure and applaud him, and will govern himself by the consideration of their virtue and wisdom jointly. The result will be, that he will feel perfectly indifferent to the praise or blame of one set of men, however loud ; and will derive a satisfactory complacency or salutary mortification from the opinion of another party, how modest or reserved soever they may be.

There are some subjects, however, on which we owe no deference even to the wisest and best of men. Among these are the abstract principles of virtue, and the fundamental doctrines of religion. We are not to consult them, whether we should be pious and benevolent, but whether it appears by our conduct that we are so : not on the existence of moral goodness, but whether our actions be agreeable to its principles ; not whether the morality of the Gospel and the duties of religion be binding on us, but whether they do actually bind us, and whether our deportment be reconcilable with the maxims of morality and religion. When such testimony is borne to the purity of our lives, we are so constituted by nature as to feel the most satisfactory pleasure ; a pleasure in the approbation of such men, and an additional confidence in our own determinations. The concurrence of good men in our favour is what is called character ; and our ambition to deserve their esteem, a regard to reputation. On these I shall offer some observations in the sequel of this paper.

Character or reputation, for I shall use them in the same sense, is an opinion formed of a man from the whole of his conduct. A man may have a good character as a merchant, and an indifferent domestic character. He may have a high reputation for learning, and a low one for morals. He may have no pretensions to a character for religion, and yet make a splendid figure as a

patriot or a statesman. At present, however, we are concerned only with his moral and religious character.

As different persons will make more or less favourable, and more or less accurate observations on any individual, so must they give him different characters; and as his private character with each is the result of the observations which that person has had opportunity to make, so his public reputation is the collective result of the private opinions of all those, who have had occasion to observe his conduct.

Now, notwithstanding the complicated nature of character, and the fallacious ingredients, which enter into its composition, it is in general so far correct, that most men, who have been long conversant in the world are justly estimated on the whole, though some less obvious parts of their conduct may be misapprehended, and notwithstanding any uncertainty that may still remain, there is no appeal. A man must abide by the general opinion formed of him; and on this opinion his prosperity and happiness will in a great measure depend.

Hence it follows, that the establishment of a reputation for the useful and respectable virtues is a primary object with every man; and that, as this requires a considerable length of time, the foundation must be laid early. No man who is exposed to the view of others, can long remain without a character; that which he first obtains will not be easily shaken off; and the removal of a bad foundation will occasion more trouble than the erection of the whole edifice; besides, that these changes always give rise to a mixed character, and leave a doubt concerning the ruling principle. The first object of a young man, therefore, is to begin on a clear foundation and a simple plan. His line of life should be plain to all. Men neither love nor trust what they do not understand.

If this last circumstance be attended to, the undertaking will not prove so difficult as it at first appeared. When a young man conceives, that he is watched with jealousy and suspicion by every one around him; that each individual forms an opinion of him according to the bent of his own mind, and that his public estimation must depend on a combination of these opinions, and be affected by every imprudent action or indiscreet expres-

sion of his own, and by every malignant reflection, or wanton insinuation of others, he will find himself in a very unpleasant and dangerous situation ; and if he is playing a part or wearing a disguise, he unquestionably cannot think too unfavourably of his prospects ; but under the direction of honour, generosity and fidelity, and with the clue of religion, he will see his way plain before him, and easily thread the labyrinth of life. It may appear confused, intricate and alarming, but its intricacies will unravel of themselves, and the most threatening phantoms will vanish on his approach.

A fictitious character is a broken reed, that fails in the time of need, and pierces the hand that leans on it. A man's public character may be unknown to his familiar friends, and even to himself. They may mistake the civility of the world for confidence, and the courtesy of society for friendship ; but a man's real character is seldom a secret to those, who have an interest in knowing it ; and his pretensions to any thing else are blown up on the first miscarriage. Any expectation to the contrary of this will disappoint the most artful and experienced ; and in a young man it will prove a dangerous and fatal delusion. He must study to acquire the reality as well as the appearance of virtue, not only the reputation but the consciousness of fair and honourable intentions.

This consciousness is attended with several important advantages. It will bestow that air and manner, which inspire confidence and conciliate esteem ; and it will coufer on himself a conviction that he deserves and enjoys the approbation of his fellow-citizens. Feeling himself in possession of such a precious and respectable quality, he will labour to improve it, and cautiously shun every thing by which it may be endangered : as a poor man, who would otherwise become desperate and profligate, grows sober and thrifty, when by any circumstance he happens to acquire a property worth saving or improving.

One useful motive to the preservation and improvement of reputation is the principle of honour. But unfortunately the true point of honour is often mistaken, in which case it misleads instead of directing us. It is therefore a matter of principal importance, that our am-

bition be pointed to an useful and laudable object. If a young man will place his point of honour on such objects as are truly praiseworthy, and at the same time of real use to himself and others, he will transfer to these objects those feelings, which others lavish upon some frivolous, pernicious and dangerous notion ; and will exert the same resolution and spirit in prosecuting his objects, which others display in fashionable follies, or dangerous and criminal acts of courage and revenge. These fantastical and guilty propensities are followed through every degree of hazard and vice, merely because they are made a point of honour, and not on account of their intrinsic excellence ; and if the spirited and faithful discharge of our peculiar duties were early adopted as our point of honour, they would be pursued with the same zeal, perseverance and intrepidity.

The beneficial consequences of a fair character, especially in commercial life, are so well known even by persons of the least experience, that I shall not enlarge on what most men understand and feel better than I do myself. We are all fully persuaded, that when a man has obtained a fair reputation and respectable character, he has made a most valuable acquisition ; to be preserved with the most studious care, and guarded with jealous anxiety. It is a precious fruit, of slow growth and easily blighted ; and there are abundance of wasps and hornets, ready, with gratuitous malice, to taint it. “A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches ; and loving favour rather than silver and gold.” A good name is better than precious ointment, and as flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour, so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honour.

As the jealousy of the person himself is justified by the precious and precarious nature of his reputation, so should our tenderness and delicacy to others be excited by the same circumstances. But this is not merely a point of humanity to the individual : the public has a share in the reputation of its members : for it is that quality which puts it in their power to be of greatest service to the community, and without which they are not only useless but pernicious to society. As these considerations of public and private interest are so intimately

connected, I shall not attempt to treat of them distinctly; nor shall I pronounce an indiscriminate censure upon the freedom commonly taken with character, but rather submit a few plain remarks on the justice, humanity and policy of this practice conjointly, without entirely condemning that censorial privilege, which is generally claimed, and often exercised for the public benefit.

There are a variety of circumstances in every person's condition, which render him more or less a proper object of this censorial jurisdiction, both in a public and private capacity.

The age of the party suggests some observations on this subject, which should regulate our conduct with respect to him. From these I shall select one in favour of the young, and another in behalf of the old.

A young man labours under a great disadvantage in *this* respect, that as he has not had time to establish a decided character, he is judged of by every action singly. We too often forget the indulgence that may be justly claimed by that time of life, and do not make the allowance due to ignorance, inexperience, passion, and imprudence, qualities natural to that season; and not having an opportunity of comparing our observations with those of others, or correcting our hasty conclusions by the standard of general reputation, we often condemn a youth for improprieties, which we should have overlooked in a man. A person of mature years is thus pardoned for faults, that would decidedly prejudice us against an inexperienced boy. As this is a hardship to which youth are necessarily exposed, previous to the formation of an established character, so is it a circumstance that should render them peculiarly circumspect in their conduct. A young man may think it very unfair and cruel that he should be condemned for two or three imprudent or vicious actions, while he sees persons, of riper years, more circumspection and less passion, retain their estimation in society, though guilty of many more; and it is no doubt very hard; but he should consider, that these are the only grounds, on which the public can as yet found an opinion. He must consider himself as in a state of tuition and probation, and conduct himself as one subject to censure, and ambitious of praise. The result of this is, that the world should be, if not more

indulgent, at least more cautious and deliberate in appreciating the worth of young people; and young people more wary and circumspect in their actions.

A man of established character has this advantage over the young, that he is not so rashly suspected, or hastily condemned: if he has passed through a sufficient probation, and enjoys a well earned reputation, this is an advantage to which he is well entitled. Although men are always in a state of trial, with respect to the opinion of the world, as well as with regard to God; and although whatever divines may decide about the falling from a state of favour with our maker, no man is safe from forfeiting his reputation with his fellow creatures, yet a man of tried prudence and virtue has a right to expect that he shall not be wantonly or even hastily condemned. If his conduct be in any respect doubtful, he is warranted in taking some credit for character. If the action appear to be imprudent, we should suppose that there are circumstances in the case, of which we are ignorant, or of which we are not the most competent judges. Though it may have the appearance of proceeding from some unjustifiable passion or propensity, especially if it be contrary to his general character, we should suspend our judgment and suppose that he may be actuated by some respectable and consistent principle, unknown to us. Most actions are so complicated with the characters and relations of the several parties concerned, and so intimately connected with what has gone before or is to come after, that a person not concerned in the transaction cannot be a competent judge of its merits, and one intimately concerned can hardly be expected to form an impartial opinion. There are also many parts of a man's conduct, which, however fair or honourable, he has it not in his power to explain, either from some peculiar delicacy in the business itself, and the relation subsisting between the parties; or from not knowing that he is censured. It sometimes happens too, that a man of high principle and nice honour will disdain to put himself on his trial, and enter on his defence against the malicious charge of some contemptible accuser. He may feel, that the suspicion is an insult, and that his friends and

neighbours do him wrong in hearkening to the calumny, and putting his honour and integrity in competition with an unworthy slanderer.

A man may be suspected of severity, who acts from a principle of enlightened and unimpassioned justice; and of selfishness, who only exercises a species of benevolence above the comprehension of the multitude:—one has often been reprobated for grinding the faces of the poor, only because he acted on a plan of the most humane and enlarged policy for their good: a man has been deemed avaricious and parsimonious, only because his accusers were ignorant of his circumstances; and blamed for austerity to his family or dependants, from ignorance of their character and the necessity for his conduct. In all these cases he has a right to the privilege of character, and may justly complain of those who refuse it.

On the whole, we should be unwilling to suspect a person of approved reputation, because he has a right to the benefit of character: and we should be more tender of the young, because they are more liable to be injured. That these observations are well founded, we may conclude from the law of evidence, which is grounded upon the accumulating experience and observation of the wisest men. Testimony to character is admitted, not merely because a good character may entitle the criminal to pardon or mitigation of punishment, on the principle of humanity or example; but as tending to invalidate evidence against the accused. A fair reputation will often cast doubt and suspicion over evidence, that might be conclusive against a person of undoubted infamy; and we may readily conceive some characters so high, and some crimes so inconsistent with the general conduct of the accused, that no evidence would be deemed sufficient to convict him. On the other hand, the respect paid to testimony is also appreciated according to the character of the witness.

The next circumstance that requires delicacy and caution with respect to character, is the sex of the party. The female sex have, in common with men, a right to the privileges of an unspotted reputation, and having once acquired it, they should be protected not only against wanton insinuation and slander, but all suspicions

or accusations, that are not founded on the clearest evidence. Among the weighty considerations on which this right is founded, such as the peculiar delicacy of female character, and its inestimable value to themselves and others, it should be observed, that in this as in every other respect, they are utterly defenceless, and must depend entirely on the justice and generosity of others. The injured party cannot take a single step in her own vindication without humiliation, and even degradation. Without, therefore, denying the use of a censorial power in the public, even on this delicate subject, I may surely be allowed to say, that it should, in this case, be exercised with the greatest reserve, and never except on some plea of duty; a plea, which, I believe, can seldom be set up by those, who make female reputation the theme of their discourse. These persons should also consider, that in this, as in other cases, the accuser always exposes himself to a comparison with the accused, and challenges a scrutiny into his or her own character; and that in these cases the public are not disposed to be partial to the calumniator; the friends of the suffering party are peculiarly severe upon the censor; and the censorious are gratified with a double feast, first in the censure of the accused, and then in discussing the reputation of the accuser. In short, in this case above all others, a man is sure of being judged with the same judgment, with which he hath judged; and receiving the same measure which he meted out to others, and even more—good measure, heaped up and running over, will they pour into his bosom.

The last circumstance which I shall mention, as calculated to govern that discretion which we exercise in judging our brethren, is the peculiar delicacy and importance of professional and official character. A man's reputation is valuable both to himself and society, in proportion to the situation which he holds, and there are certain relations to which a peculiar responsibility and importance are attached: among these are the liberal professions, in which a man's usefulness depends on a supposition, that he possesses a certain purity of mind and conduct, or some scientific knowledge, of which the generality of people are incapable of judging, and which they must, therefore, take upon trust. To call this in ques-

tion on slight grounds, is to do the individual an irreparable injury ; and as far as he is serviceable to the public, so far have they a right to complain of and resent such rash and pernicious interference.

The same observation applies to persons in high official situations. These are the persons most exposed to virulent, systematic and interested calumny ; and by diminishing the public confidence in men of this description, the whole nation will sometimes suffer uneasiness, terror, discontent, and loss of credit. At the same time, it must be acknowledged, that these are the persons upon whom the censorial power of the people is most properly exercised, and whose character and conduct it is most necessary to canvass : but this should be done with a degree of candour and deliberation suited to the importance of the subject. It may also be said, that men who hold elevated posts in the government will always find friends to vindicate their merits, and even palliate their insufficiency and crimes ; and with respect to personages of such high rank, this is probably true ; but there are others, who hold very important situations, which expose them to daily detraction, who have it not in their power to make any defence ; and who sometimes do not even know that they are made the objects of obloquy ; while there are thousands, who feel an interest or pleasure, and have daily opportunities of exciting public odium against them. In all these cases, the public should incline, for their own sakes, as well as a regard to justice, to screen them from such envious and malicious detraction.

When men are forward in reviling and slandering persons in respectable situations, whether professional or official, they justly provoke this question, “who art thou that judgest ?” Where didst thou acquire, or how hast thou displayed that degree of learning, ability, integrity, and public spirit, which entitles thee to rail at these eminent persons, as ignorant, insufficient, selfish, or corrupt ? When a comparison is instituted between such persons and their detractors, it is often found, that the persons most forward to declaim on the insufficiency or corruption of others, are those very persons who have least pretensions to capacity, purity or self-denial, themselves.

From the view which I have taken of this subject, I hope we may safely conclude, that "a good name is better than precious ointment," and like it, is easily corrupted and tainted. It diffuses a pleasant, wholesome and salutary fragrance round the virtuous man, which attracts the esteem of all that hear of his merit, becomes more and more grateful, as it is more nearly approached: and while "the name of the wicked shall rot," this precious ointment of a good name shall embalm the memory of the righteous to future generations. NEMO.

LETTER FROM MR. W. H. DOHERTY,

STUDENT OF DIVINITY, EXPLAINING HIS REASONS FOR RENOUNCING HIS CONNEXION WITH THE SYNOD OF ULSTER.

[The Editors of the Bible Christian would earnestly recommend the following letter to the attention of *all their readers*; and more especially to that of those among them who belong to the Synod of Ulster. It affords an example from which they may judge of the probable effects of the measures recently adopted by that body. The writer is well known to all who are acquainted with the affairs of the Royal Academical Institution, as a young gentleman of distinguished abilities and attainments; exemplary in his conduct, and eminently successful in his studies.]

SIR,—I am a student of divinity in connexion with the Synod of Ulster, and to that body all my friends and relations are attached. If, therefore, in the following remarks, I find myself compelled to blame its late proceedings, I shall, at the same time, carefully avoid offending any one by indecent or unbecoming violence.

You are aware that the Synod of Ulster, at its late meeting, in June, 1832, passed an act whereby all candidates for the ministry, are required to signify their assent to all the articles of belief contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith. How it happened that the large and respectable body of avowed Arminians in the Synod, concurred in forcing on the consciences of the young men under their care, a system of doctrines to which they are themselves openly opposed, I shall not stop to enquire. They have certainly earned for themselves by their timid and cringing policy in this matter, the contempt and scorn of every generous mind. They have permitted their own opinions to be publicly stig-

matized as heretical, and contrary to the word of God. Nay, they have passed a sentence of unqualified condemnation upon the very opinions which they themselves maintain, and solemnly bound themselves to prevent any young man from entering on the office of the ministry who agrees with their own religious sentiments. All these indignities and insults, however, they have been mercifully enabled to bear, without a word of opposition, or a murmur of discontent. But it is vain to speak of actions that are done and cannot be easily undone; as matters stand at present, a belief in the doctrines contained in the Confession of Faith, is an indispensable pre-requisite for all who present themselves as candidates for licence to any presbytery in connexion with the Synod of Ulster.

The time is now at hand when I must necessarily decide upon this matter, and either give my unqualified assent to the truth of all the doctrines contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith, (for I utterly despise the mean equivocations and subterfuges that are sometimes resorted to,) or separate myself at once from the General Synod, and join some other religious body which is guided by more liberal principles.

After having thought long and seriously upon this subject, and having examined the arguments which support what is called Orthodoxy, with as much care, and diligence, and attention, as possible, I am now compelled to believe that many of these are opposed to reason and scripture. My only resource, then, evidently is, to quit that body, with whose sentiments I cannot agree, and avow openly those opinions in which I conscientiously believe. My grounds of dissent from the General Synod of Ulster, are briefly the following:—

I. I consider the discipline of that church, as at present enforced with regard to candidates for the office of the ministry, not only as being intolerably tyrannical and unjust, but also as unscriptural, and directly opposed to that which was recommended by the Apostles, and practised in the early ages of the church. There is no reason to believe, either from the scripture, or from any well-authenticated history of the church in the early ages, that an uninspired form of words was made use of as a creed, either by the apostles or their immediate successors; and no synodical committees seem to have been

permitted, in their times, to tyrannize over the consciences of the brethren. I should therefore feel it my duty to quit the Synod of Ulster, even did my religious opinions agree with those which that body esteems to be Orthodox.

II. On the ground of doctrine, also, I dissent from the Synod of Ulster, and at no period of my past life, could I have given my assent to all the doctrines contained in the standards of faith which that body has recently adopted.

1. I cannot sign the "Confession of Faith," because the Bible is, and ought to be, the only rule of faith and practice, requiring no supplements, and no additions. In the Bible there is a Confession of Faith dictated by the spirit of God, and to the truth of its doctrines I am willing to subscribe; but I will not consent to rest my faith on any creed composed by fallible men; indeed the Westminster Divines do themselves (in the 31st chapter of their "Confession of Faith") clearly admit, that the decrees of Synods and Councils are improper standards of faith. They maintain that "All synods or councils, since the times of the apostles, whether general or particular, may err, and many have erred, therefore they are not to be made the rule of faith or practice, but used as an help in both." Now in this very just opinion all who sign the Confession of Faith must, of course, entirely concur; but by the very act of subscription, they virtually deny the truth and justice of the above sentiment; and submit to have a mere human composition forced upon them as their rule of faith.

2. I cannot sign the "Confession of Faith;" because I conceive that it trenches upon the great fundamental doctrine of all religion, whether natural or revealed, viz: the unity of God. I do not find the word trinity, or any word synonymous with it, in the Bible: nor is there a shadow of Scripture evidence for either of the following extraordinary announcements:—"The Son is *eternally* begotten of the Father." "The Holy Ghost *eternally* proceedeth from the Father and the Son." Surely if God intended to reveal a doctrine so wonderful to his creatures, he would not have left it as a mere matter of inference, for the support of which, even its most strenuous advocates cannot produce a single particle of direct evidence from the Scriptures. Had the fol-

lowing dogmatical assertion of the Westminster divines any passage at all synonymous with it in the Bible, the question would at once be settled:—"There are three persons in the Godhead; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and these *three* are *one* God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory." But so far is this assertion from being supported by Scripture evidence, that there is not from the one end of the Bible to the other, a single, solitary text, in which the existence of a *three one God* is even hinted at. I, of course, omit purposely the passage in 1 John v. 7, where the "three that bear record in heaven" are mentioned, as all are agreed that this is an interpolation. I cannot believe then in the anti-scriptural doctrine that represents the indivisible and omnipresent God as composed of three parts, equal to one another, and each equal to the whole.

3. I cannot sign the "Confession of Faith," because, the doctrine of election and reprobation, so largely insisted on in that work, seems to me to be in direct opposition to the whole tenour of scripture; which always represents the sinner as having power, either to repent of his sins and be forgiven, or to continue in them, and take the consequences. Besides this doctrine of predestination, or fatalism, as its heathen advocates formerly called it, undoubtedly makes God the author of sin; because if God has from all eternity decreed whatever has happened, or can happen; and if he does himself "execute those decrees by his "works of creation and providence," then it certainly follows, that every wicked action which men have committed, was planned by the Omnipotent from all eternity; and that they were only passive, and powerless implements by which he executed his plans. According to this system, God has given laws to men, threatening them with everlasting torments if they disobey them; but from all eternity he has ordained that they should be broken; and this he executes (that is, breaks his own laws,) by the instrumentality of those very creatures, for whose guidance they were apparently given. To this doctrine all scripture is directly opposed. I shall content myself with a few texts which ought in my opinion to satisfy any unprejudiced mind. In the 18th chapter of Ezekiel, the Lord himself, by the mouth of his prophet, graciously condescends to give a particular account of

his dealings to the children of men. "Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son: *the soul that sinneth, IT shall die.*" Again, ver. 21, "If the wicked will turn from his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die." Ver. 30, "I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord. Repent and turn yourselves from your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin." Ver. 32, "For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God, wherefore, turn yourselves and live ye." Indeed the whole of this beautiful and consolatory chapter is filled with the most distinct, clear, and pointed refutations of those antichristian doctrines respecting predestination and imputed guilt; which, wherever and whenever they have prevailed, either in the heathen or the christian world, have spread a gloomy, baneful, and demoralizing influence, over the hearts of men. In Mathew, 23d chap. 37th ver. our Saviour affirms, that the Jews had power to repent; and that he had frequently and earnestly desired that they should do so; but their blindness and obstinacy had always prevented them. If the following text does not demonstrate that men may reject the offers of the Gospel, when they might have received it, had they been so inclined, I must conclude that the words are utterly meaningless. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." There is nothing here of the decrees of God, nor of "His eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will, whereby for his own glory he has fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass."

4. I cannot sign the "Confession of Faith," because I do not believe that any human being will be punished eternally on account of Adam's guilt. "The Bible expressly says, "The Son shall not bear the iniquities of the father," and the Apostle in describing the last judgment, says, "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ that every one may receive the things done in the body according to that *he* hath done, whether it be good or bad." 2 Corin. 5th chap. ver. 10.

Here is no mention of any man being required to answer for the guilt of Adam's first transgression."

5. I cannot sign the "Confession of Faith," because I never did and never will believe the abominable doctrine which it so strongly asserts,—that many of those children who die in infancy before they are capable of distinguishing good from evil shall pass from their almost unconscious state of being in this world, to an eternity of punishment and torture in the next. The man that can seriously believe that the smiling infant which is from the very nature of things utterly incapable of committing any sin, shall, when the brief hour of its mortal existence is over, be doomed by the Almighty Judge to suffer torments for ever, does in my opinion display the characteristics of a heart that is not right with God. Our blessed Saviour says of children, that of such is the kingdom of heaven, and shall we not believe the words of the mild and merciful Jesus, rather than the wretched cant of a gloomy fanaticism?

6. I cannot sign the "Confession of Faith," because the following sentence appears to me to be equally erroneous, presumptuous, and vain. "Those who are not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the word, &c. cannot be saved, much less can men not professing the christian religion be saved in any other way whatsoever, be they ever so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature and the law of that religion they do profess; and to assert and maintain the contrary is very pernicious and to be detested." Now it happens that the Apostle Paul does assert and maintain directly the contrary of all this. Rom. 2 chap. 16 ver. "When the Gentiles which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves," and nothing I conceive could be more decidedly opposed to the dogmatism of the above sentiment, than the words contained in the 12th verse of the same chapter. "There is no respect of persons with God; for as many as have sinned without the law, shall also perish without the law; and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law." I therefore altogether deny the truth of the sweeping assertions contained in the standards of Orthodoxy with respect to the condemnation of the whole heathen world.

7. I cannot sign the "Confession of Faith," because I do not believe that civil magistrates ought to have any authority in matters of faith; and I conceive that the following passage arms the magistrate with all the powers of a judge in the "holy Inquisition:"—"The magistrate hath authority, and it is his duty, to take order, that unity and peace be preserved in the church; that the truth of God be kept pure and entire; that all blasphemies and *heresies be suppressed*; all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline prevented or reformed; and all the ordinances of God duly settled, administered and observed. For the better effect thereof he hath power to call Synods, to be present at them, and to provide that whatsoever is transacted in them be according to the mind of God." I am aware indeed that many who sign the "Confession of Faith" do so, with a secret understanding that the sentiments quoted above are erroneous; for it is evident that if the civil magistrate ought to use the power with which he is entrusted for suppressing what he considers heresy; the very men who are most zealous in favour of this persecuting doctrine would soon find themselves among the sufferers. The truth is, that the sentiments contained in the "Confession of Faith," with regard to the power of the magistrate, go to justify and excuse all the violence, cruelty, and persecution with which bigots and fanatics have disgraced the religion of Christ; and should these sentiments generally prevail in the world, they would make every governor an unreasonable tyrant, and every subject a despicable slave. How very absurd and anti-christian is the opinion that magistrates have power to be present at all synods, and "to take order that whatsoever is transacted in them be according to the mind of God." For what magistrate will attempt to arrogate to himself a knowledge of the mind of God, unless his impiety and his hypocrisy be great indeed? The very humblest christian who can read his Bible, and pray for the spirit of God to assist him in understanding its precepts, knows generally as much, if not more, of the "mind of God," than any one of those rich and proud men who usually govern the affairs of nations.

These are the principal reasons that have determined me to leave a body with which I have been connected

from my childhood, and to join myself with one, to the members of which I am comparatively unknown. I am well aware that all my relations, and many of my friends will join in censuring my conduct in this instance; and the charge of rashness and folly will be preferred against me, for an action which is in fact, the result of the coolest and soberest examination, continued at intervals during the last six years. I am well aware that many who now love me will henceforth turn from me with coldness and dislike; and many of the friends to whom I have been long attached, will cast me off. I know that I shall be in many respects a loser, and in none a gainer, except in that priceless feeling of happiness which accompanies and rewards us in the performance of our duties. I shall only add, that what I have in this instance done, is the result of my own unbiased judgment. I have not been advised or persuaded by any one, nor am I under any obligations to the leaders of any religious party. Your obedient servant,

WM. HUGH DOHERTY.

Royal Belfast College, January 24, 1833.

REVIVAL OF CANT.

THE following paragraph appeared in the *Belfast Commercial Chronicle*, of Saturday, January 12, 1833:

“Interesting Religious Services.—The American Churches appointed the first Monday of this year as a day of ‘fasting and prayer’ for the revival of religion, the usefulness of the Christian ministry, and the success of those benevolent institutions which have for their object, the conversion of the world to God. In announcing this appointment, they kindly entreated all Christian ministers and people in other lands, to unite with them in prayer for the accomplishment of the above objects. In compliance with this interesting request, the following ministers of this town unanimously resolved to hold meetings on Monday last, and to request the attendance of as many of their respective congregations as could possibly attend—Rev. Drs. Hanna and Bryce, and Rev. Messrs. Edgar, Morgan, Wilson, Carlile and Bellis. The following was the order of the services:—In the forenoon at eleven o’clock, a meeting was held in Fisherwick Place Meeting House, when the Rev. Messrs. Morgan, Edgar, Carlile, and Wallace of Holywood, were present; an address on the subject of revivals, founded on Jeremiah 14, viii. and ix. was delivered by the Rev. James Carlile. At the same hour a meeting was held in the Secession Meeting House, Berry-street; when Dr.

Hanna and the Rev. Messrs. Bellis and Wilson were present : Dr. Bryce delivered the address. In the evening another service was held in the Independent Meeting House, Donegall-street ; the house which holds about 1000 persons was filled—the Rev. Messrs. Morgan and Carlile, and Dr. Bryce, took part in the services ; and an impressive address, in explanation and defence of religious revivals was read by the Rev. J. Edgar. The impression made on the minds of all who attended these interesting services was so evidently a salutary one, that the ministers, who united, have resolved to make arrangements for continuing these meetings for united prayer. In the mean time it was intimated that a similar meeting will be held in the Independent Meeting House on the evening of Monday, the 21st instant.”

We regard this paragraph as the *puff-preliminary* to a new series of operations, intended, like many which we have lately witnessed, to stir up the dying embers of bigotry and fanaticism in this part of the country. To justify this opinion, it will only be necessary to remind our readers of the nature of that exhibition which in America is called a revival ; and to describe those plans whose success is now to be made among the Orthodox in Ireland, the object of periodical prayer.

The revival system commenced in England, not less than twenty years ago ; but its excesses in that country, being confined to a few congregations of Ranters, Jumpers, and other enthusiasts of the lower orders, attracted but little of the public attention, and soon died away. It was not until the year 1825 that the churches of the Orthodox Presbyterians in the central and western parts of the State of New York, were visited with the pestilence, which has since given rise to so many deplorable evils. Most of our readers are aware, that by some nominal Calvinists, and by the great majority of the Methodist persuasion, a sudden and instantaneous *conversion*, as it is called, by the immediate agency of the Holy Spirit, is regarded as the only sure ground of hope and confidence towards God. Now, “a revival of Religion,” is supposed to be neither more nor less than a sudden “*outpouring of the spirit*,” upon a great number of persons at once, so as to affect either the whole or a considerable part of any particular congregation ; and thereby, to transform the people from vessels of wrath fitted for destruction, into Saints ripe for paradise. As the object of the Revivalist is not to produce such a change of heart as will permanently amend the

conduct, but such an excitement of the feelings as will raise the soul to the required pitch of ecstatic confidence and transport, so the means commonly employed for this purpose, are not those of calm, rational and scriptural expostulation, but threats of the most appalling description, denounced against those who remain unaffected by the prevailing fanaticism; and more especially against all who discourage or in any way discountenance the proceedings of the agents in the work. These agents are, in America, generally persons of coarse and vulgar minds, but sufficiently acquainted with the weak and bad parts of human nature, to adapt their measures with some skill to the characters of the individuals upon whom they mean to act. By domiciliary visits, accompanied with a copious exhibition of *cant*, and a plentiful display of the terrors of everlasting perdition, (which they would seem to affect to have almost entirely at their own disposal,) they frequently succeed in producing such a degree of alarm and dismay, especially in the minds of the weaker sex, as forms a suitable preparation for subsequent operations. Those who are thus far overcome by fear, are rapidly conducted through the routine prescribed by custom as the pathway of the sinner from a state of enmity against God, to one of imagined reconciliation and acceptance; and thence to enthusiasm and spiritual pride. It matters not if in this career, the peace of families be invaded, and the closest ties of life torn rudely asunder. Such events are supposed to tend on the whole rather to the advancement of the good work; and are not very scrupulously deprecated. Indeed no one moral characteristic more distinguishes the Revivalists than their comparative regardlessness of the nature of the means employed, provided that the end which they have in view is effected. Prayer-meetings are now held, at which those who are supposed to be "*awakened*," and those who are as yet only "*anxious*" are expected to be present. The services on such an occasion are usually conducted by lay members as well as by settled and ordinary ministers. In the addresses to the Deity, a very gross and indecent familiarity with the Supreme Being, is the most striking feature. Next to this, their most remarkable characteristic is the unwar-

rantable liberty taken with the names and characters of individuals. In the discourses which are delivered at these meetings, the wrath of heaven is freely denounced against all who are suspecting of looking with aversion on the progress of the Revival. Dreadful descriptions of Divine justice and the future judgment are employed as the means of working up the hearers to the required pitch of enthusiastic terror. The meeting, which is almost always held at night, is frequently prolonged to a late hour. The work of prayer is engaged in with renewed fervour. The groans of those who anticipate only the horrors of everlasting perdition as their inevitable doom, resound from every part of the place of assembly. Now and then a voice of exulting transport may be heard from some individual who fancies that the passage from death unto life has been effected in his own case. As the excitement increases, these indications become more frequent and more boisterous. Shrieks and sobs are intermingled with clamorous shouts of triumph. Women and children are often carried forth in a fainting state; and thus the work proceeds, until the exhausted frames and over-excited minds of the auditory can no longer sustain the agitation of the scene. The assembly is then dismissed, only to be resumed on another occasion with increased numbers, increased influence, increased fervours and success. When by this means a sufficient number of persons belonging to a congregation have been gained over, the minister and leading members, if formerly opposed to the Revival, are either obliged to give in to the general delusion, or if they continue obstinate in opposition, are unceremoniously dismissed. The Revivalists having now obtained the ascendancy in the church, exercise their newly acquired power for promoting the same objects on a larger scale. The whole Society is soon brought into conformity with the views of those missionaries of mischief. Its name is then chronicled as an accession to the ranks of those churches which have been visited with a "*Revival of Religion*:" and the agents in this work go forth to exercise their pernicious functions in some other place; assisted, encouraged and strengthened by the success they have experienced.

As a particular instance will leave on the mind a more definite impression than the most accurate general de-

scription, we may select as an illustration and example of the facts above recorded, the case of one of the most influential and popular promoters of Revivals that ever appeared in America—the Rev. Nathan Beman. This man was invited to the pastoral office in a Presbyterian congregation at Troy. While his settlement was yet in progress but not ecclesiastically ratified, some scandalous rumours respecting certain differences between him and his wife, reached his Presbytery; who appointed a committee to investigate his conduct. Beman, however, by prevarication and falsehood, succeeded in obtaining the desired settlement. But his domestic difficulties continued; his dishonesty was exposed; he was obliged to have recourse to some stratagem of no ordinary efficacy, in order to avert the ruin which threatened him. In this emergency, he thought no means so promising as the assumption of an extraordinary sanctity or sanctimoniousness of manner, and an uncommon zeal for the interests of religion. This he imagined would bolster up his tottering credit: he even declared to a member of his congregation, that if he could only succeed in maturing a successful “Revival” in his church, all would be well, as he could then afford to set his censurers at defiance. Accordingly he engaged in the work with eminent ardour, ability and success. And this man is one of the great apostles of the Revival system: second only to the Rev. Charles Finney, or, if not to him, then second to none, for eminence in the work!

Having mentioned the name of Mr. Finney, we are tempted to lay before our readers some specimens of that *pungent* style of preaching the Gospel, which in his case has been so successful. He is reputed, (and the report though published on the spot, has never, so far as we are informed, been contradicted,) to have closed a sermon to the people of Utica, with the following Address:—“You, sinners of Utica, and some of you who now hear me, will go to hell; and the saints and angels will look down from heaven; and when they see the sinners of Utica in the lowest, deepest, darkest pit of hell, they will shout and clap their hands for joy.” On another occasion he is stated to have said—“We shall see the Restorationists come smoking and fuming

out of hell to the gate of heaven; which being opened, they will say, 'Stand away, ye old saints of God; we have paid our own debt: we have a better right here than you! And you too, Jesus Christ! Stand aside! no thanks to you our being here: we come here on our own merits!' And again: "Why, sinner, I tell you, if you could climb to heaven, you would hurl God from his throne! yes, hurl God from his throne! O yes; if you could get there, you would cut God's throat! yes, you would cut God's throat!"

It would be easy, from authentic publications now lying before us, to fill not a page but a number of this work, with extracts of the same kind and character from the addresses delivered by this Reverend Minister and his coadjutors. But enough—enough—and much more than would have been enough; were it not necessary to expose the nature and tendencies of that system, with whose invasion we are now threatened, in the province of Ulster.

Before bringing these strictures to a close, we feel it to be incumbent on us to justify the severity of some among them by the production of a few authorities. The authorities which we shall bring forward will at least be allowed to be unobjectionable witnesses when they testify against the measures of the American Revivalists: for they are all, without exception, American Calvinists, and *friends to the cause of Revivals* generally: although they admit the existence of evils which have accompanied their progress.

The Rev. Mr. Nettleton, of Connecticut, thus describes the course pursued by Mr. Finney.

"The account which his particular friends give of his proceedings, is in substance as follows. He has got ministers to agree with him, only by "crushing" or "breaking them down." The method by which he does it, is by creating a necessity, getting a few individuals in a church to join him; and then all those who will not go all lengths with him, are denounced as enemies to Revivals; and *rather than have such a bad name*, one and another falls in to defend him; and then they proclaim what ministers, elders, or men of influence have been "crushed" or "broken down." Their moral influence being increased, others are denounced in a similar manner as standing out and leading sinners to Hell. And to get rid of the noise and save himself, another will "break down." And so they wax hotter and hotter, until the church is fairly split in twain. And now, as for those elders and Christians who have been thus convert-

ed to these measures, some of them are sending out private word to their Christian friends abroad, as follows:—I have been fairly *skinned* by the denunciations of these men, and have ceased to oppose them to get rid of their noise. But I warn you not to introduce this spirit into your church and society.”*

“They do cultivate and awaken in others, what very much resembles the passion of anger, wrath, malice, envy, and evil speaking. This is the inevitable consequence of their style of preaching. As Dr. Griffen observed, ‘It sounds like the accredited language of profanity:’ or as a pious woman of colour in Troy expressed it; ‘I do wonder what has got into all the ministers, to swear so in the pulpit!’—p. 13.

The same writer says of a Sermon printed by Mr. Finney, on the subject of Revivals—

“It does not seem to hint there can be any such thing as false zeal and false religion. If the tone of feeling can only be raised to a certain pitch, then all is well. The self-righteous, the hypocrite, and all who are inflated with pride, will certainly be flattered and pleased with such an exhibition; especially if they be very self-righteous, and very proud. False affections often rise far higher than those which are genuine: and *this every preacher in seasons of revival has had occasion to observe, and to correct.* And the reason of their great height is obvious. There are no salutary checks of conscience; no holy humble exercises to counteract them in their flight. And they court observation. A Pharisee’s trumpet shall be heard to the town’s end; while simplicity walks through the streets unseen. If the preacher is not extremely careful to distinguish between true and false affections, the devil will certainly come in and overset, and bring the work into disgrace. *False zeal and spiritual pride will rise up and take the management; and condemn meekness and humility; and trample upon all the Christian graces,* because they are not up to it.”—p. 30.

On reading the sermon in question, I was reminded of the repeated complaints which for some time past I have heard from the most judicious, experienced, and best revival ministers in the West: the substance of which is as follows. ‘There are various errors in the mode of conducting Revivals in this region, which ought to be distinctly pointed out. That on the prayer of faith. This talking to God as a man talks to his neighbour is truly shocking: telling the Lord a long story about A or B, and apparently with no other intent than to produce a kind of stage effect upon the individual in question, or upon the auditory generally. This mouthing of words, those deep and hollow tones, all indicative that the person is speaking into the ears of man and not of God. I say nothing of the nature of the petitions presented; but *the awful irreverence of the*

* Letters of the Rev. Dr. Beecher and the Rev. Mr. Nettleton, on the New Measures in conducting Revivals of Religion. With a Review of a Sermon by Novanglus. New York, 1828.—See p. 12.

manner! How strange that good men should so far forget themselves, as evidently to *play tricks* in presence of the great God!—p. 35.

An Orthodox writer in the same pamphlet, under the signature of Novanglus, says to the same effect.

“If an individual awakes;—that is, if he adopts these new measures, and gets full of that kind of animal feeling which they promote, he must try to bring his minister into the same spirit; and if he cannot succeed, he must go about and try to raise a party to ‘*shake him off*.’ I have heard of such advice being given privately to individuals; but this is the first time I have ever known it to be publicly preached and printed as serious advice in all cases. And what is the rule by which individual church-members may know when it is their duty to set about this work, and try to ‘shake off’ their minister? No rule is given in this immediate connexion; but perhaps one is found on the 12th page. ‘If the *matter* of preaching is right, and the sinner is pleased, there is something wrong in the *manner*.’ If the *unconverted* part of the congregation are generally satisfied with their minister, it is a certain indication that he is a ‘sleepy minister’ and ought to be ‘shaken off.’ Individuals, then, have only to ask whether the congregation are generally in peace, and satisfied with their minister; and if they are, it is their duty to commence measures to drive him away.” p.p. 70, 71.

“A young convert made his appearance at Durham, saying that ‘he knew all about how to conduct revivals:’ and pointing to the meeting-house, told of ‘the abominations that were pourtrayed on those walls.’ He talked insolently to the minister, and to the people against him. And after an evening lecture which Mr. Willison (the Minister,) preached, he dropped upon his knees and told the Lord a long story about Mr. W., and how he had talked to him; and what he had said in his sermon that was *false*; and so tried to convince the people and the Lord, that Mr. W. was a *liar*, and going down to hell if he did not repent. Upon Mr. W’s trying to calm the people by putting the most charitable construction upon his conduct, (that of his not being in his right mind,) his brother, who was a member of the church, arose and told the people that Mr. W. was ‘the head Achan of the camp,’ and that his character was ‘as black as hell,’ &c., upon which some went and tried to still them, while the minister and others retired. For his conduct that evening, this member was laboured with by the brethren, and justified himself on the principles of this sermon (of Mr. Finney.) He said, *he had nothing against Mr. W.* but ‘he did it to have a revival.’ p. 72.

We shall insert one extract more from this invaluable pamphlet; it is from the pen of Dr. Beecher, an eminent Calvinistic Minister in Boston. Speaking of the self-sufficiency and recklessness of consequences which the new measures for conducting revivals induce, he asks:—

For why should a good man stop, who knows certainly that he is right exactly, and that all men are wrong in proportion as they differ from him? This unquestionably was the state of mind to which Davenport and his followers came. He and they, upon the subject of promoting Revivals, were undoubtedly the subjects of a religious nervous insanity. They mistook the feeling of certainty and confidence, produced by nervous excitement and perverted sensation for absolute knowledge, if not for inspiration; and drove the whirlwind of their insane piety through the churches, with a fury which could not be resisted, and with a desolating influence which in many places has made its track visible to the present day. It was this "*know-for-certain feeling*" which emboldened Davenport to chastise aged and eminent ministers; and to pray for them as unconverted, and to attempt "to break them down" by promoting separation from all who would not conform implicitly to his views, by setting on fire around them the wood, hay and stubble, which exist in most communities, and which may easily be set on fire at any time, by rashness and misguided zeal." pp. 93, 94.

We shall conclude this array of authorities by a quotation from a pamphlet entitled, "*A Delineation of the Characteristic Features of a Revival of Religion in Troy, in 1826 and 1827: by J. Brockway, Member of the Congregational Church in Middlebury, now a citizen of Troy: Printed at Troy, 1827.*" The extracts which we are about to adduce, relate to the "prayer of faith," and "particularity in prayer" so much insisted on by the Revivalists.

"To pray the prayer of faith, was to pray with a full conviction and a firm belief that the petition would be heard and answered. Nay more, it was to believe that it would be answered without a moment's delay. All prayers that came short of this faith were not only worthless, but mere mockery, and an insult offered to God. To exercise this faith was the indispensable duty of every Christian: without it, he could not pray, and without it he had no evidence of his acceptance with God. We were told by Mr. Beman in the most positive manner, that if we prayed for any thing without expecting and believing that we should have it immediately, we were guilty of a most horrible attempt to mock and insult the Omniscient God. There was no such thing recognised by God as prayer, but that which asked, expected and received the thing sought, without a moment's delay." pp. 16, 17.

"I will, for the benefit of those unacquainted with the practice, give a description of this particularity, as practised by those who had been thoroughly trained to this mode of praying. The first thing to be regarded as indispensable is, to introduce the individual by name: and in this, great care is to be taken that the name be rightly called: as a misnomer has, it is said, been the occasion of disappointment in the looked for result. The next thing in order is to tell what God knows of the individual. If, perchance, the

subject be a female, her sex must be first noticed, followed with, "O Lord, thou seest this hardened enemy of thine;" (for it has been considered wickedness to call a sinner by a softer name than God's enemy;) "Thou seest how she has raised her female hands against Thee; and how she is stretching out her puny female hands to lay hold of Thee and pull Thee from thy throne. See, Lord, how full her hands are of sharp arrows to fight Thee. Thou seest how she is hurling her defiance at Thee. Thou knowest how black her heart is, and how her enmity to thee rankles and burns with all the malice of a dæmon." And if she be present, it must be added "Thou seest how she is come in here with thy little ones, too proud to kneel before thee: Thou knowest that she has come in here on purpose to mock thee, and insult thee to thy face." After completing this description, (which was often drawn out far beyond what I have here quoted,) then might follow the petition or imprecation: "Now, Lord God Almighty, come down upon this enemy of thine! break in upon her: break her down, O Lord, break her down!" This could not be too often repeated—"Break in upon her. And if thou hast one thunderbolt in store, heavier than another, Come, God Almighty, and break it over her head. Break her down! Crush her at thy feet! Slay her before thee!"

* * * *

This is a fair, though faint specimen of the kind of praying which has been so abundant in Troy. I say, a *faint* specimen: because to render it any ways complete, it should be accompanied with loud groans, and all that kind of action which denotes extreme distress."

pp. 22, 24.

Reader—cast your eye over these passages;—study them closely;—remember that they come not from Unbelievers, Unitarians or Heretics, but from *Orthodox* ministers and laymen, living in the neighbourhood of the places where the scenes which they describe occurred; recollect that they have been penned *not by the enemies*, but by the *friends*, of the system of revivals, and you will understand the nature and tendency of those measures for the success of which so many learned Doctors and reverend Divines of Belfast, are to engage periodically in prayer.

This is the age of *cant*. Nothing is too gross to find approvers and supporters, if it be brought forward with a sufficient display of pharisaical zeal, and ostentatious sanctity. "*The Tongues*" have had their advocates: and "*Revivals*" will of course have theirs. But good will come out of every thing.

We shall revert to this subject, *if need be*.

R.

The Wanderings of Christendom from Gospel Truth, and the Prospects of its return to Primitive Evangelism. A Discourse, by B. T. STANNUS, of Edinburgh.

We have only time and space to recommend this eloquent and argumentative Sermon to the attention of the Unitarian public. It will be found well worthy of a repeated perusal. The following extract, taken almost at random, will give some idea of the author's style. He had been speaking of the progress of divine truth in America, Geneva, England, and Ireland; and thus refers his auditors to their own country.

"What shall we say of Scotland? Have we not ground of thankfulness in the fact of many of her children coming to 'the first love' of the Christian world? Do not the gradual accessions which are being made to our flocks, justify the 'full assurance of our hope' as to the farther progress of inquiry, and consequently the more extended diffusion of Unitarian Christianity? I believe, and unhesitatingly affirm, that our prospects are brightening every day. The reverence for antiquated systems, which have no sympathy with human improvement, and which are lagging lazily behind the march of education, is crumbling to decay: and when the 'accredited standards,' by which spurious Christianity is supported, cease to be regarded as infallible, and when the Bible is tried upon its own intrinsic merits, apart from the conflicting testimony of appendages, whether in the form of CATECHISMS or CONFESSIONS, a rational faith will still more extensively prevail; and the 'land of the mountain and the flood' will be more abundantly watered by the streams of saving knowledge which issue from the throne of the Eternal. Why should we not hope for these glorious results?—look at England,—multitudes of Trinitarian churches have become temples of Unitarianism. Why should we not hope?—look at America,—once was the country of the 'strip'd and starred banner,' wrapped in the mists of error as with a funeral pall; but now, almost every hill and valley from the St. Lawrence to the Gulf of Mexico, is hallowed by the worship of the ONE TRUE GOD, in the name of Jesus Christ. Why should we not hope for the progress of the Unitarian faith in Calvinistic Scotland?—look at Geneva, the scene of Calvin's labours, where is its Calvinism now? almost totally lost in the light of Gospel truth. Should not all these things inspire us with hope, and stimulate to exertion such as have an interest in their fellow-men? Our congregations are not as yet numerous, *but they are gradually and steadily increasing*; and if we are zealous in our duty, and earnest for the blessing of God upon our work, in the words of the Psalmist we might say, '*There shall be a handful of corn in the earth, on the tops of the mountains, the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon; and they of the city shall flourish as the grass of the earth.*'" May the Almighty Father of all strengthen our hands in His hallowed cause! May we be imbued with the spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ! And may all our righteous endeavours to bring our fellow-men to their 'first love,' be crowned with success! Amen."

Intelligence!

On Sunday, the 20th of January, a Lord's Day Evening Service, especially intended for the benefit of the working classes in this town, and to be conducted by the Students of Divinity belonging to the Remonstrant Synod and Presbytery of Antrim, was commenced, at the Room in Talbot-street, No. 1, (lately occupied by the Belfast Library,) which has been hired for this purpose. We have received several communications on the subject of this undertaking; which we are obliged for the present to postpone. The object has our warmest wishes for its success; and we trust the friends of religion and morality among the lower classes will lend it their countenance and support.

OBITUARY.

DIED—On the 13th of January, 1833, the Rev. SAMUEL MARTIN STEPHENSON, M. D.; formerly Minister of the Presbyterian Congregation of Greyabbey, in the county of Down; and for many years practising as a Physician in Belfast.—In recording his decease, we record the departure of no ordinary man. We are therefore grateful to those friends who have enabled us to lay before our readers, an ample account of his personal history and of his professional character, from authentic sources.

Dr. Stephenson was born in the year 1742, in Straidbally-morris, a townland in the Upton Estate, on the eastern bank of the river Clarry, or Clady; where it empties itself into the Six-mile-water, and forms the western boundary of the parish of Templepatrick. He was the youngest son of James and Margaret Stephenson, alias Martin. His father was a native of Ballybracken, in the parish of Connor, and came into possession of his birthplace in right of his wife, whose father and two brothers emigrated to Philadelphia in consequence of reverses and disappointments, that befel them, from the failure of government speculations at the close of the wars in the Netherlands. He was nursed until he could remember, even late in life, the circumstances connected with the period of being weaned, and was early destined for the ministry in consequence of his eldest brother having declined, contrary to the wishes of his parents, to pursue the studies necessary to qualify him for that office. His first rudiments of education were learned in Templepatrick;—a place which was always regarded by him with respect, and as he advanced in acquirements he was sent to Antrim, where he completed his classical education, at the same time, and in the same class, with others who have since been well known and respected in Belfast—Robert Holmes, of Donegall-place; Wm. R. Adair, of Brookfield, and Chs. Rankin, of Richmond Lodge, son of the presbyterian minister of Antrim, in whose session-house the school was then held. Having fitted himself according to the directions of his Minister the Rev. Mr. White, for entering College, he proceeded to Glasgow with the late Rev. John Thomson, of Carnmony, and in the first session entered, much to his regret

afterwards, the Ethic class, though he had then an opportunity of enjoying the instructions of the celebrated author of the "Wealth of Nations," which by Dr. Smith's immediate removal from the University, would have afterwards been rendered impossible. When he returned the session following to prosecute his studies in Natural Philosophy under Anderson, the chair of Ethics was filled by the celebrated metaphysician Reid; and he was induced to enter himself as his pupil also, so that he had the singular good fortune of being the pupil of two of the most celebrated philosophers of their time.

His theological studies were directed by Leechman at the same University, and he was soon afterwards licensed by the presbytery of Templepatrick at Ballynure.

His father being engaged in the superintendence of public works, had little time to devote to the care and regulation of his family, who were now advancing in life, forming matrimonial connections, and incurring expences, which his resources were inadequate to meet. His son Samuel was accordingly obliged, in the year 67 or 68, to repair to Monaghan and connect himself with the Diocesan School of that district, in consequence of which he was transferred by the presbytery of Templepatrick, to the care of the presbytery of Monaghan. His change of residence was an incident which eventually had great influence in directing the course of his after life and fortunes. He lived there with Mr. Braddock, an apothecary, and there first imbibed a knowledge of Pharmacy, and became acquainted with the son of Mr. Plunket, of Strand-street, Dublin, who afterwards followed the medical profession with such celebrity in his native city. During his residence there, repeated overtures were made to him to enter the established church under the auspices of the Bishop of Clogher; but Divinity had never any allurements for him in the garb of Episcopacy.

Having remained two years in Monaghan, he returned to his paternal roof, where he made known to his parents the taste he had acquired for medicine, and was supplied by his father, who entered into his views, with the means of repairing to Dublin and studying anatomy at the University, under the direction of Dr. Cleghorn. He resided there in Charles-street, with natives of the parish of Greyabbey, called Bell, whose family have since risen to great distinction, and were in all probability one of the means of bringing about his future establishment and connection with that parish. Having now entered fully on the study of medicine, he pursued it with characteristic perseverance, and went, in 1773, to the University of Edinburgh, then the most approved school of that science. He had there the good fortune of being the pupil of the most approved and celebrated teachers, Cullen, Gregory, Monro, Black and Home.

On his return from Edinburgh, he was invited on trials by the congregation of Greyabbey; and after surmounting various difficulties in consequence of his persevering steadfastness to the faith, as it is in Christ Jesus, in opposition to the commandments of men, he was ordained to the charge of the congregation, but not before

such a schism had taken place in the Presbytery of Bangor, which then superintended it, that it became finally divided into two, the Presbytery of Bangor, of which he continued a member, and the Presbytery of Belfast, which adhered to the dogmas of Calvin.

Of these transactions a full account has been given by our valued correspondent Erasmus, in the B. C. for May, 1830, from the ancient records of the Presbytery of Bangor.

These troubles and the duties that followed his appointment, arrested for a time his medical studies, which were not completed until 1776, when he graduated in Edinburgh by defending a Thesis *de Typho*; in the management and treatment of which he continued ever afterwards to maintain the confidence of the public. During his ministry at Grey-abbey, he married *Mary*, the daughter of the Rev. James Armstrong of Portaferry, and being unable to promote the education and prospects of his rising family to his satisfaction in that retired district, he accorded to the wishes of his connections, resigned the parotral charge, and settled as a physician in Belfast, in 1786, where he became immediately recognized as a man of education, and established as a practitioner. In those stormy periods of politics, though he had the strongest bias to liberty and the extension of its principles, yet he could never be induced to involve himself with the disaffected; as he considered the foundation of their system erroneous, in consequence of its want of connexion with and its denial of the principles of Christianity; its too close alliance to and toleration of Deism. He accordingly avoided giving any assistance to the schemes then in agitation; but entered with spirit and promoted with earnestness every institution that tended to the diffusion of knowledge and science among the community to which he belonged; with this view he compiled and delivered a course of lectures on Chemistry in the Belfast Academy, and connected himself with the various literary institutions of the town; especially the Society for promoting Knowledge and the Literary Society of Belfast. To his connexion with the latter we are indebted for the compilation of many essays on the Antiquities of the counties of Down and Antrim; some of which are before the public—one edited by the Literary Society on the Linen and Hempen Manufacture of the Province of Ulster, and two others which he published—one for the benefit of his native parish, on its history and antiquities, and another on the parish of Greyabbey, as a memorial of his esteem and continued affection for the congregation.

He was an early efficient and steady supporter of the Academical Institution, in hopes of at length establishing for his native province a collegiate seminary that should relieve those in pursuit of knowledge from the expence and toil attendant on the acquirement of it in the chilling atmosphere of foreign seminaries. While busied in following his professional avocations, and zealous in fostering literature, he did not neglect the calls of charity, but was always ready to assist the benevolent in relieving the distress of the needy, not only as far as his pecuniary means would afford, but also devoting his professional services gratuitously to alleviate their diseases. He is accordingly found soon after his settlement in town

a physician to the Poor-house and Infirmary, and was the physician who first attended our fever hospital on its establishment, where his practice was attended with singular success. Of the first 60 patients who entered during the three months he continued in charge, there was not a single casualty. The Epidemic soon afterwards subsided, and he was not called on to resume his attendance again until 1818, when the Institution having fallen into difficulties, he stepped forward to its support. Though far advanced in years, and overtaken with the usual infirmities of age, yet he advanced to the duties with steadiness, and adhered to the charity, until it became fully established in the confidence of the public, and rescued from the danger of dissolution. He was finally relieved from his public duties in this office by his son in the year 1821, and gradually withdrew himself from the duties of his profession as he found his energies and abilities decay under the infirmities of old age, occupying himself latterly with agricultural pursuits, which always afforded him infinite amusement and recreation. He retired more and more within the range of his domestic circle, until his death on the 13th inst. in the 91st year of his age.

The following has been communicated by an eminent Physician in this town :—

As a Physician, Dr. S. was very much esteemed and respected, both at Greyabbey, where he originally practised, from the period of his graduation in 1776, and at Belfast, where he settled in 1786.

He had studied Philosophy and Divinity at a very favourable period at Glasgow, under the ablest masters who have at any period flourished at that University, and when he afterwards applied to the study of Physic at Edinburgh, he was not less fortunate in having had Monro, Black, and Cullen, for preceptors. From those great men as his models, and from his own peculiar genius, he formed a character for simplicity in his method of prescribing, for accuracy in discriminating, and acuteness in predicting the events of diseases, not easily met with in any physician.

He preserved, through life, a remarkable attachment to those simple manners and phraseology which prevail among the most enlightened and respected part of the Presbyterian rural population in Ulster. From having been educated both as a Divine and Physician, his pursuits were more varied than is usual; he had a great diversity of knowledge, and great opportunity of diffusing it; he had a lively wit, originality and quaintness in his conversation, which often turned upon antiquities, mechanical arts, rural economy, and statistical enquiries. He was much beloved by his patients, and his society sought after by their families. To the poor he was peculiarly attached, and whenever he acted as a physician to the Poor-house, the Dispensary, or Hospital, his regularity and devotedness to his duties were most exemplary, and almost unequalled; he continued to exercise his compassion and skill in this way, as long as his age and health permitted.

His Thesis printed at Edinburgh in 1776, treated of Typhus Fever, and his attention afterwards was much devoted to the study of that disease; and as a great change had taken place about that

period in the mode of treating that complaint, he acquired a degree of reputation for success in the cure of it before his arrival in Belfast. He was among the first in this province who introduced the use of Stimulant and Tonic medicines in that disease: and if he has preserved a record of the event of his practice, it must prove a valuable document, as affording an example, both in extensive private and public practice, of the comparison between different, and almost opposite, methods of treating one of the most important of all diseases. Of 63 Typhus patients received into the Belfast Hospital in 1796, under his care, 60 recovered, all of whom were treated upon the Stimulant and Tonic plan.

Besides his professional attainments, he cultivated several other branches of literature with considerable success. He was an early, if not an original, member of the Literary Society of Belfast (of which he ultimately became an honorary member) in which he read several interesting and original papers, two of which have been published, one giving a statistical account of his native parish, Templepatrick; the other upon the history of the Linen Manufacture in Ireland, in which last he has endeavored to prove that most of the technical terms employed by the native Irish, in their own language, as respecting that manufacture, are derived from Arabic or Hebrew roots, which position, if thoroughly established, would throw great light on Irish Antiquities. On the Natural History of Lough Neagh, he composed an ingenious and elaborate paper, another upon the subject of the ancient "Tumuli," or Doons, which are so numerous in all parts of Ireland, and a third upon a collection of Urns, and Stone Coffins, discovered near Gray Abbey, while he was minister of that parish; some of these Urns and Doons were beautifully painted by his friend Mr. Fabbrini; he also wrote some Geological memoirs.

He was an early and zealous member, and became one of the Managers of the Belfast Royal Institution, which is much indebted to his indefatigable attention in watching over its interests. One of the principal objects which he always held in view in his connection with all these different Institutions, was a scrupulous attention to rigid honesty and economy in the management of their funds. It is supposed that he was too scrupulous in his notions of economy in some instances; certain it is that the greatest differences that existed between him and the other members of the different Public Institutions with which he was connected, originated from his strict views of economy—On all occasions his own services were given gratuitously.

About ten years ago a very admirable portrait of him was drawn by the late Philip Kelly, and I hear there has been another portrait by M. Fabbrini, both in oil.

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[FOR THE BIBLE CHRISTIAN.]

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN.*

THE story of Joseph and his Brethren is perhaps the most instructive portion of Scripture history. The first part exemplifies the fatal effects of parental partiality and domestic dissention: the second exhibits a signal instance of retributive justice; and the conduct of Joseph in the close is a lesson of generous forgiveness, fraternal affection, and filial piety. The Midianites, to whom he was sold by his brethren, added him to their gang of slaves, and proceeded to Egypt, where he was sold to Potiphar, the captain of the king's guard, by whom he was promoted to an office of trust and honour in his household. His personal qualities also attracted the notice of his mistress, and exposed him to a treacherous and seducing temptation. His effectual resistance has been ever since considered as a glorious proof of his integrity, and has procured him at least proverbial fame. Besides the seduction of passion, he had many powerful motives to combat. His resistance argued not only self-denial, but such a love for innocence, as inspires the upright man with a perfect indifference to consequences. His abilities and exemplary conduct had procured him the unlimited confidence of his master. A deviation from this line of conduct would probably have ensured him a continuance, or even an increase of prosperity. An upright perseverance in fidelity threatened him with ruin: and the threat was executed with the greatest severity. He exposed himself to the revenge of an enraged and disappointed woman, who had frequent opportunities of wreaking her vengeance on her slave. He lay at the mercy of one who could best conceal her own

* For Jacob and Joseph see vol. iv. page 1.

guilt by accusing him, and whose influence might defy his recrimination. He was accordingly convicted on her evidence ; and thus, stigmatized with the infamy of an adulterer, a traitor to his master's house and interest, and an ungrateful slave to a most kind and indulgent lord, he was thrown into a dungeon. Here also his wise and righteous behaviour shone forth with such a lustre among the abandoned inhabitants of the prison, that it procured him the favour even of his keeper, though not much accustomed to the operation and influence of virtue, and by his profession steeled against the kind and gentle affections. Here he had the first opportunity of displaying his prophetic skill. Here he experienced that ingratitude for the suspicion of which he had been cast into prison. And here he learned that lesson, which few people pass through the world without learning to their cost or practising to their dishonour ; that as the cup of intemperance inebriates the head, so the cup of prosperity intoxicates the heart, and banishes from its recollection the companions of our sorrow ; and that when we climb the ladder of ambition, it is not convenient to be encumbered with our old benefactors. For notwithstanding the indulgence which he had shewn to one of the officers of Pharaoh's household, then in the prison, and notwithstanding a solemn promise of endless gratitude, yet when the chief butler was restored to his place he did not remember Joseph, but forgot him. It scarcely occurred to him that he had ever known such a man, and if it did occur that such a person existed, it was accompanied with a recollection of his own misfortunes and disgrace, and his obligations to a slave, and his ingratitude to a friend, and his violation of his promise. These were unpleasant reflections, and who can wonder that the chief butler banished them from his mind ? They might make him uneasy for the time, and induce him to set his conscience at ease, at the expence of much trouble, but they could not promote him at court, or make him more acceptable at the table of Pharaoh. For these reasons he "did not remember Joseph, but forgot him." That I have not misinterpreted the reasons of this forgetfulness will appear from the sequel. At the end of two full years, "it came to pass, that Pharaoh dreamed

a dream, and sent for all the magicians of Egypt and the wise men thereof, but there was none found, that could interpret the dream unto Pharaoh. Then spake the chief butler unto Pharaoh, I do remember my faults this day. Pharaoh was wroth with his servant, and put me in ward, both me and the chief baker: and we dreamed a dream in one night: and there was with us a young man, and we told him, and he interpreted our dreams; and as he interpreted so it was: him he hanged, and me he restored to my place." He never once recollected that his friend was lingering in jail, under an unjust and cruel suspicion, whilst his own interest was out of the question. For two full years, this had never occurred to his mind; but no sooner did an opportunity offer of ingratiating himself with Pharaoh, and of making Joseph's abilities subservient to his own preferment, than the whole transaction was called to mind. He confessed to the king that he remembered his faults—not the crime of ingratitude; he never in all probability reproached himself with it, and by no means intended to make so unfashionable and uncourtly a confession. The faults which he remembered were those for which he had been cast into prison. The consequence of his recommendation of Joseph was, that he had the pleasure or perhaps the mortification to see his friend exalted far above himself, and appointed first counsellor to the king.

In this exalted station the conduct of Joseph was directed by a wise, and as far as he himself was concerned, a liberal and disinterested policy. He accomplished in the most effectual manner the great purposes for which he was intrusted with sovereign power. Wisdom and fidelity were the characteristics of his administration. To a superficial reader of his history he seems indeed to have paid greater attention to the interest of his sovereign, than to the ease or liberty of the subject; to have been more enamoured of the virtue of fidelity, than attached to the interests of humanity, or dazzled with the glory of patriotism; and even to have considered the throne of the monarch as an altar, on which he was to sacrifice the dearest privileges of the people, by the instrumentality of a monopoly of the necessaries of life. But, without entering into a minute detail, it is fair and

proper to observe, that some vigorous efforts have been made to free him from these aspersions, by the penetrating diligence of modern criticism. I shall only observe, that his foresight was of essential service to the people by preventing a seven years famine—that the provisions which he had bought up with the property of his master, he had an unquestionable right to dispose of for his benefit; and that after obtaining the property of all the land of Egypt, he restored it to the original proprietors for a quit rent of one fifth of the produce of the land, which considered as rent paid to a landlord, was a liberal appointment, and considered as a tribute to the state, did not exceed a single tax in modern times. If this were in lieu of all other imposts, the Egyptians were peculiarly happy in having so mild and moderate a ruler. It is not, however, my design to illustrate or comment upon the conduct of Joseph in his public station; nor did the sacred historian mean to give us lectures on government, when he committed to writing the wonderful and instructive transactions of Joseph's life. The great and peculiar excellence of sacred history is, that passing over briefly those great transactions from which very few of its readers could derive any improvement, or useful information, and the examples of men in an elevated rank, it pries into the secrets of private life. It draws forth into light the hidden motives of the heart, the meditations of the night, and the projects of the cabinet, as well as the actions that are avowed in the face of day. Passing over with brief applause or cursory strictures, the exalted virtues or ruinous vices of the great, it dwells upon the daily occurrences of a private family. And whilst the most minute events of Joseph's youth, occupy a large portion of that book which contains a history of the world for two thousand years, the great and powerful kingdom of Egypt is scarcely mentioned, and its mighty monarch is honoured with a place, only as the patron of Joseph. Indeed the private history of Jacob's family is very intimately connected with the public character of Joseph, for in consequence of the prudent preparations which he made against the approaching famine, Egypt was the only country that was able to support its inhabitants. "When Jacob therefore heard, that there was corn in Egypt, he said

unto his sons, Why do you look one upon another? Behold, I have heard, that there is corn in Egypt. Get you down thither, and buy for us from thence; that we may live and not die. This circumstance renewed the intercourse between Joseph and his brethren; and consequently brings us back to the familiar events of this instructive story.

It is not very easy to assign a wise and natural reason for the manner in which Joseph received his brethren. We cannot help suspecting, that a principle of revenge had a temporary influence on his mind; and that the harshness of his behaviour was in some degree dictated, and the yearnings of brotherly love in some measure suppressed, by resentment for former injuries. Whatever might be the cause, we have no reason to regret the effect; for it greatly prolongs and diversifies the story, produces some of the most affecting incidents, and gives rise to several most striking and instructive reflexions.

When the sons of Jacob appeared before their brother, he immediately recollected them; but perceiving, that an absence of more than twenty years, a strange habit, and above all, a miraculous change of circumstances from the misery of a slave, to the splendour and power of a viceroy, were an effectual disguise from the penetration of his brethren, he dissembled the feelings of his heart, addressed them by means of an interpreter, and affected to consider them as spies. He even cast one of them into prison as a hostage for the rest, whom he released only on condition, that they should bring satisfactory proofs of the sincerity of their professions. This severity extorted from them a reflection of deep contrition for the cruelty of which they had been guilty themselves. "We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us. We were verily guilty." And is this the first time, ye cruel and ruthless men, that ye have reflected on your offence? Did it never occur to you before, that a deliberate resolution to murder your brother, from which ye were dissuaded only by the suggestions of avarice, was a crime of the deepest hue? Ye have contrived to aggra-

vate that, which is generally esteemed the greatest crime, by determining to perpetrate it on the person of a brother, in defiance of every duty to your father, of every emotion of affection to the tender age of an innocent youth, or of compassion for his cries, and of every principle of religion. And is it only now, after an interval of two and twenty years, that you are convinced of your guilt? Should you not rather have expected from that accursed day to have been tormented with the never-ceasing persecution of divine vengeance, and like so many Cains to have been fugitives and vagabonds in the earth? Should you not like him have heard the Lord continually crying in your ears—What have you done? Now ye are cursed from the earth. When ye till the ground: it shall not henceforth yield unto you her strength: fugitives and vagabonds shall you be in the earth! For by what sophistry can ye apologize for your sin? By what casuistry can ye excuse yourselves from the guilt of murder, when you were dissuaded from it only by the basest and most contemptible motives? How could ye have heard the daily lamentations of his wretched father, or reflected on the memory of his departed mother—how could ye have gone to rest at night, or risen in the morning, or partaken of the comforts of your domestic board, without reflecting with anguish on the misery of your absent brother? How could ye have raised your eyes to heaven, or approached the altar, or lifted up your voice in prayer, without being distracted with the horror of your crime?—Yes, all this they could have done. They could have stifled every emotion. They could have extinguished the lamp of the Lord. They could have wilfully forgotten the horrid nature of their crime. For this is done in every day. And is it not wisely done, say the votaries of sin? Why should we disturb the serenity of our minds by such unpleasant reflections? why should we interrupt the smooth current of prosperity, or wilfully infuse such bitter ingredients into the cup of pleasure? No—it is not wisely done. When a man has sinned, the wisest thing he can do, is to repent. When a man is wounded, it is not wise to suffer the member to mortify, rather than submit to the painful operation of a surgeon. But though amputation should be necessary, it is wisdom

to submit. And though the recollection of your sins should wring your souls, and inflict intolerable anguish, it is wisdom to repent, to endure the smart rather than suffer your conscience to be corrupted, and your heart to be mortified. Cut off your right hand, pluck out your right eye, and cast them from you, rather than suffer them to infect the whole body. Cut up every sin by the roots; submit to all the pangs of contrition, rather than suffer it to taint the whole soul. For be assured, that though you may disguise the wound of your conscience, there is no other method of healing it than by repentance. Though you skin it over, yet it will break out afresh. The flattery of pride, the delusion of uninterrupted prosperity, and the intoxication of pleasure, may bury recollection in oblivion, and stifle the cries of nature and the emotions of a tender heart, but the time will come, when you will speak the language of Joseph's brethren. "We are verily guilty—" therefore is this evil come upon us. In this reflection there are three things worthy of our notice; first, that they had been able to conceal not only from the world, but almost from their own hearts, and their own recollection, the guilt of this heinous and villainous conspiracy for more than twenty years; secondly, that their drowsy, and stupified consciences were roused by the first sound of misfortune, and by the embarrassment of their situation; these two circumstances have been commented on already; but the third is, the connection which they trace and acknowledge between their crime and their misfortunes—"therefore is this distress come upon us." It is the language of nature; and it expresses an innate principle of human nature. It argues a native conviction, that sin will never remain both unrepented of, and unpunished; that though the sinner should conceal his offence in the darkest abyss, though he should veil it with the cloak of hypocrisy, or hide it within the folds of his heart; yet there is a Being, from whose penetration it cannot be concealed, and from whose power the offender cannot be protected. Though many years should in their flight behold the sinner in a state of prosperity, he is only reserved for the deeper damnation, and adorned like a gorgeous victim for a more solemn sacrifice. And happy is that

sinner who suffers soon, who feels the pangs of compunction and the weight of divine indignation in this life, before he goes hence, to that place where repentance will not avail.

The next verse is expressive of another principle of human nature. When Reuben heard his brethren bewailing their misfortunes, acknowledging and repenting of their crime, he said, "Spake I not unto you, saying, do not sin against the child, and ye would not hear; therefore, behold his blood is required." How readily do we exculpate ourselves! How willingly throw upon others the whole guilt! How greedily lay claim to all the merit! 'Tis true, Reuben did remonstrate against the design of putting Joseph to death. But how did he remonstrate? Was it with that earnestness, with those imprecations of divine wrath, with those threats of discovery with which a brother's cause ought to have been pleaded? If he had set his face against the designs of killing, or exposing, or selling his brother, from the beginning, is it possible that any of them could have been carried into execution!

It is not my design to enter into a connected detail of the history of Joseph. I trust that this most elegant and pathetic story, is not unknown to any; and though it were, I should be sorry to make an attempt that would infallibly disgrace myself, and degrade my Author; for as the history is the most pathetic, instructive, and eventful, any where to be found, so it is impossible to surpass, or even equal the beauty and simplicity of the narration. Nor would I attempt to point out every circumstance in the character of Joseph, from which instruction might be gleaned. This would be too tedious a task, and would protract this article to too great a length. I shall not therefore relate the events of the second journey of Jacob's sons, nor the manner in which Joseph tormented his brethren, by an affected severity and suspicion. Nor shall I enlarge on the pathetic manner, in which he made himself known, and thereby solved the whole mystery. I cannot, however, avoid mentioning, the pious and friendly apology for their former misbehaviour, with which he furnished them. "Now, therefore, be not grieved or angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life. And God sent me

before you to preserve for you a posterity on the earth ; and to save you by a great deliverance. So that now it was not you that sent me hither, but God."

Thus, instead of upbraiding his unnatural brothers, this amiable and injured man strove to soothe and quiet their guilty and fearful hearts, ascribing their conduct to the operation of Divine Providence, from partial evil educating general good. Jacob and his family procured a peaceful and happy settlement in the dominions of Pharaoh. They spent their days in peace ; but when Joseph's brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, " Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil that we did unto him." Notwithstanding these apprehensions he behaved to them as brethren, and sincerely forgave them. Though the authority of a parent, and respect for the peace of his old age might have operated as a powerful restraint, yet Joseph shewed by his conduct, that it was unnecessary, and that he could forget a conduct of which he could never have been guilty, and forgive a sin, which it was not possible he should commit. Thus the latter part of his story is equally instructive with every other. Scripture itself can scarcely boast of a human character more edifying and more worthy of our imitation. ERASMUS.



GROUNDLESS CHARGES AGAINST UNITARIANS.

THE calumnies, public and private, which have been circulated in reference to the principle and character of Unitarians, have been so multifarious, that to notice them separately, would be equally a work and a waste of time. Such of them as are worthy of reply, I must reduce to a few general heads ; many of them are so perfectly absurd and so obviously contradictory, (such as that we are at once "*Deists*" and "*Atheists*,") that I may safely leave them to a natural death, or to mutual destruction.

We have, as a body, been accused, I may observe in the first place, of a general want of reverence for the Holy Scriptures,—a disposition to twist them to our own purposes, or when occasion requires, to set them aside altogether. This charge must be familiar to most of your

readers: but if any wish to see it in its full malignity, let them consult the "Orthodox Presbyterian," No. 12, page 422, in an article entitled "Unitarian Canons." Now, this is a sweeping and tremendous accusation, to be preferred against any denomination of professing Christians: and if there were any foundation for it, we might well be ashamed to hold up our heads in the presence of a Christian and Scripture-reading community. In preferring this charge, however, our opponents seem to calculate safely on a general lack of Scripture knowledge, and of calm reflection among the people to whom it is addressed. But, unless there were something in our general deportment to give the lie to our profession, persons of any discernment must be satisfied that it is our deep reverence for the word of God, and for the convictions of our own conscience founded thereon, that has led us to the adoption of the principles we profess, and to that honest avowal of them, in the face of popular prejudice, which, among other difficulties, has brought down such a shower of obloquy on our heads.

Although we regard our authorized English translation of the Scriptures as being generally accurate, yet we do not profess to think that the Translators were inspired, or infallible. Neither do our opponents. We think we are able to detect various inaccuracies in the translation,—none of any great importance:—so do they. And whoever has read the works of Trinitarian controversialists must have observed, that they are obliged to have much more frequent recourse to the task of revision and correction from the original, than we; although it is most probable that the translators generally entertained similar views of theology with themselves. We are far from throwing any blame upon them for this, where there is any reason in the proceeding; for we reckon it proper, in all cases where the original will bear us out, in reconciling scripture with scripture, to do the same. Yet we trust we are not comparatively deficient in reverence for the Holy Scriptures. We trust there is no good reason to suspect us of it; and we must just refer it to the good sense of our brethren around us to make the comparison for themselves, and to decide *who they are* that most honour the volume of Divine revelation—they, who must express their creed

in the language of men ; or they, whose creed is plainly expressed in the word of God :—they, who have shewn that they are not content with the Bible as the only proper test of Christian faith ;—or they, who look upon it as being so *sui generis*, so incomparably excellent, that they will neither impose upon others, nor suffer to be imposed on themselves, any other test whatsoever. Let our Trinitarian brethren think and speak of us as they may, we do cherish a true reverence for the Holy Scriptures ; and we say to them in the spirit of sincerity—Shew us, *from the Word of God*, that our distinguishing principles are not agreeable to the scope and terms of Scripture, and that yours are :—shew us this,—not by a dark or insulated expression here, drawn into a forced connexion with another there, but by the obvious and honest principles of a sound exposition ; comparing spiritual things with spiritual,—making Scripture its own chief interpreter,—explaining that which is difficult or doubtful, by that which is certain and easily intelligible ; and thus making it appear that your views are more consistent than ours with the plain unsophisticated meaning, and the general bearing of Divine revelation : *do this* ;—and we are not so obstinately wedded to error, for its own sake ;—we are not so desperately enamoured of obloquy and defamation ; but that our reverence for the teaching of Scripture, and our natural concern for our temporal comfort, and still more for the security of our spiritual interests, will oblige us at once to lay down these mistaken views, and take up those which may be shown to be more in accordance with Christian truth. Such a course as this would do signal service to their cause, and reflect high honour upon themselves. But this is not the way in which our brethren have treated us, or conducted themselves. They find it much easier, perhaps more congenial to their taste, and certainly much more likely to prove successful with the ignorant and prejudiced portion of the community, to misrepresent our principles, than vindicate their own from Scripture. So long as it is found to answer their purpose, there is evidently less difficulty in traducing and vilifying the views of their neighbours, than in proving to the satisfaction of intelligent minds that their own rest upon the sure basis of Revelation.

The unreasonableness and turpitude of such a course must be obvious to every intelligent and honest mind ; and let us hope that the world at large will soon learn to judge of us, and of our reverence for the Holy Scriptures,—not from the vague and groundless charges of our opponents,—but from the conformity of our principles, and of our general deportment, to that sacred volume, which we profess to regard as the sole rule of faith and duty.

Another accusation has been frequently preferred against us ; and one which, if there were any foundation for it, should cause all christians to fly from us, as from a pestilence. We are charged with lowering the dignity of the Son of God, the Saviour of the world, and degrading him from his throne of glory ; we are charged with taking the crown from the head of the Redeemer, and reducing him to the level of a man like ourselves. Your readers have all heard these charges reiterated again, and again. But to those who are acquainted with the sentiments which we entertain of the personal dignity and glory of our Divine Saviour, this awful charge cannot but sound as the grossest slander upon our religious views. Even those who are hardy enough to utter it are themselves aware that it is perfectly groundless ; for our sentiments on this subject are before them, and before the world. We do not, indeed, because the doctrine happens to be popular, affect to regard our Lord Jesus Christ as being himself the supreme God. We dare not bestow upon him a character which, in our estimation, he himself distinctly and uniformly disclaims. Neither dare we offer up those prayers to the Son of God, which he himself has so plainly taught us to address to the Universal Father,—even to that infinitely great and gracious Being to whom he humbly and constantly offered up his own. But, whilst we thus, upon his own authority, reserve our highest adoration for that Being whom our Divine Master himself addressed as “*the only true God,*” we, nevertheless, do most thankfully receive and acknowledge our Lord Jesus Christ as the “*beloved Son of God,*” who had being and blessedness and glory in the bosom of the Father, “*before the world was ;*” and who, in the fullness of time, came forth from the Father as the messenger of

grace and truth and salvation to a perishing world. We cannot but entertain the deepest veneration for him as the Messiah,—the appointed Redeemer of the world—the “one mediator between God and men.” And we desire most unfeignedly to honour and accept of him in all the high and gracious offices which he sustains in that capacity,—as the anointed Prophet, Priest and King of the people of God,—as “given to be head over all to the Church,”—as “ordained of God to be the Judge of the quick and the dead.”

Although, therefore, we dare not ascribe glory to Christ as “God in the highest,” though we think we are prohibited from worshipping him as the Supreme Deity; yet do we most cordially venerate and honour him as the worthy ambassador and representative of the Deity; as having come to men in the name and with the authority of the Deity; and therefore styled by the Evangelist “Immanuel”—God with us, and by the Apostle “God manifest in the flesh,” and now, for the suffering of death, and for the great work of benevolence and mercy thereby completed—now exalted to still higher degrees of glory on the right hand of the eternal throne, where he is represented as still fulfilling the part of a gracious mediator, as our “advocate with the Father,” our “Intercessor at the right hand of God.”

Now, these are the sentiments which the Holy Scriptures teach us to entertain of the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ. These are the views which Divine Revelation has imparted to us of the personal dignity, and the glorious offices of our Divine Mediator and Redeemer. We are ready to ascribe to him, and we do actually ascribe to him, all the high offices, dignities, and honours, which the word of God any where ascribes to him, which he any where takes to himself:—and we cannot but think, that we are not in any measure derogating from his true glory, by declining to offer him that supreme adoration which his own teaching and example lead us to regard as belonging to the Father only. These our sentiments are well known to our Trinitarian brethren around us:—and knowing them as they do, they should not continue to malign us, and violate their own convictions, by the awful but groundless accusation

of "taking the crown of glory from the Redeemer's head, and reducing him to the level of a man like ourselves."

With the same observations, we reply to all those foul and defamatory charges which have been so long and so loudly rung upon the public ear; as, that we "deny Christ,"—that we "have no faith in a Redeemer;" that we "deny the Lord that bought us;"—in a word, that we are Deists, and do not believe in Divine revelation at all. It may be seriously questioned, whether any man be a believer in Divine Revelation;—whether he be a believer in God,—who can thus, in the face of truth, and, without any foundation of evidence whatsoever, become the accuser of his brethren. It is not strange that the ignorant, the unreflecting and the prejudiced, who listen to such accusations against us, should shun equally our public ministrations, and our private society.—But we ask, why are such charges as these preferred against us? Not assuredly because they are true; for our brethren know they are not:—not because there is the least reason to suspect they are true; but because they are well calculated to alarm the serious, to fan the prejudices of the ignorant, and confirm the horror of the bigot. And we appeal to those who know us best, who have the best opportunities of knowing us, by attending on our public ministrations, and mingling with us in the intercourse of society,—whether our ordinary pulpit instructions,—our perpetual reference to the sacred Scriptures as our sole standard in religion,—and, still more, whether our whole tenor of life and conversation, do not rise up in refutation of such gross and groundless calumnies?

Is it because we cannot digest all the dogmata of Calvinism, that we are to be charged with rejecting the plain and wholesome truths of Christianity? Is it because we believe, on the authority of revelation, that "there is one God, and one mediator between God and men," that we are to be set down as unbelievers and deniers "of the Lord that bought us?" Is it because we have discovered an anxiety to preserve the word of God from the contaminations of men, that we are to be stigmatized as having no reverence for the holy Scriptures? Is it because we are careful, so far as God gives us the

ability, to set before the eyes and understandings of men the most perfect testimonials of the divine origin of the Gospel, and especially that most persuasive evidence of its authority—a christian life,—that we are thus to be characterized as Deists, and branded as persons who have no faith in divine revelation? We are not of the number of those who look to the authority of great names :—we never quote them as of any weight in matters of faith ; but, in relation to the subject we are now upon, we may be permitted to refer to a few from among the many distinguished men who have entertained our views of Christian doctrine : and we ask, are such men as Locke, Newton, and Milton, and Clarke, and Lardner, to be regarded as deists and unbelievers? Men who brought unwonted learning and talent to the honest investigation of Christian truth ; and who, by freeing the Gospel of Christ from the rubbish of ages, have done more for the great cause of genuine Christianity, than all who have succeeded them? And, without underrating the valuable labours of a Beattie, and a Campbell, a Watson and a Paley, we may safely assert that these latter have done little more than throw the immense mass of excellent materials wherewith their great forerunners had supplied them, into other forms. Yet men such as these, it seems, must be regarded as deists and unbelievers ; and, just because they were not Calvinists and Trinitarians, they must be calumniated as having no faith in that holy religion, which it was the close, and earnest, and successful labour of their lives to elucidate and establish !

But thus it has ever been ; and thus we may fear it will be, so long as there shall be ignorance and bigotry among men. Such calumnies as these have been the unfailing companions of those in all ages, whose sentiments of religion, howsoever just in themselves, have not squared with the absurd judgment of the multitude.—Our Lord Jesus Christ, notwithstanding his perfect truth and purity, was himself branded as an impostor, a blasphemer, and a deceiver. His disciples and followers, though of the most plain, simple, and honest character, were a “sect every where spoken against.” The inspired Apostles of his doctrine were most “shamefully ill-treated,” and regarded as “the

filth of the world and the off-scouring of all things." Thus it is that the bigoted followers of Mahomet are accustomed to vent their rage in reprobation of the "infidel Christian." Thus it is, that the bigots among the several sects of Christendom permit their evil passions to break out in reviling and calumniating each other. And the very men who grossly defame us as Deists and unbelievers, because we think we are instructed in Scripture to worship the Father through the mediation of the son, are themselves defamed as Deists and unbelievers, even by their fellow-Trinitarians, and placed beyond the pale of salvation and Christian hope, because they do not believe in purgatory and transubstantiation—because they refuse to say their prayers to the Virgin Mary, and to receive absolution at the hand of a sinner like themselves.

Unitarians need not be surprised, that they should be made to pass the same ordeal, which has uniformly awaited all who have laboured to bring back Christians to their primitive doctrines of the Gospel. What right have they to expect, that they should escape those calumnies, which have been so unsparingly heaped upon the heads of all reformers, which have never failed to pursue the steps of every man who sought to rectify the prevailing errors of his time, and from which our Divine Master himself was not exempt? At the same time we cannot but lament, for the sake of truth and peace, that such vituperation should be levelled by any denomination of professing Christians against another—who are at least equally anxious to know, believe, and obey the truth. When men have consulted the Gospel of Christ with diligence and care; when they have through the grace of God, become perfectly satisfied that therein is contained a gracious revelation of the Divine will to man; and accordingly have made it the sober study of their lives to understand and conform to its holy requirements;—it cannot but be some exercise also of their Christian patience to see and hear such vilification of their religious principles; and to hear their names bandied about, as persons who treat the word of God with contempt—who despise the Son of God, the Saviour of the world, before whose judgment-seat they must one day stand—who

undervalue the gracious overtures of Divine mercy and salvation which he brings to the inhabitants of a lost world—and who can scarcely, if at all, be said to believe a single doctrine of the Gospel of Christ! To have these and such charges preferred against us from the pulpit and the press; to have them rung upon the ear in public and in private, and by men who know they are groundless, for no other purpose than to distort our principles, to vilify our character, and fan the flame of ignorant prejudice against us; and yet to let them pass unheeded and unrepplied to, would certainly seem as though we had no reply to offer, that should be satisfactory to Christian minds; or as though we were shamefully insensible to the value of our religious character, or the importance of our religious views. We hope, through the blessing of God, to be able to shew, that neither of these causes shall withhold us from the distinct avowal, or the just vindication of our Christian principles.

There are several other general heads of accusation, the review of which I must reserve for some future occasion: and in the mean time subscribe myself faithfully yours,

J. M.

Newry, 1833.

REVIEW.

The Sacred History of the world, as displayed in the creation and subsequent events of the deluge; attempted to be philosophically considered, in a series of letters to a son. BY SHARON TURNER, F. S. A. & R. A. S. L. *Third Edition.* London: Longman & Co.

WE do not introduce this delightful book to our readers either for criticism or extract; the one is as much above our power as the other is beyond our little work. We should not well know where to chuse or where to stop, did we begin, every part of the work being replete with philosophical information and beautiful observation; “a dry abstract of which,” to use the words of Edmund Burke, speaking of Adam Smith’s work,—“would convey no juster idea of it, than the skeleton of a departed beauty would, of her form when she was

alive." We would advise our readers, therefore, to possess it for themselves. It has attained the third edition in fifteen months, we believe without the assistance of professional puffing; nor do we remember to have seen any notice of the work, in any of the extensively circulated reviews or magazines, those pioneers of literature.

This work has been the production of many years. "Forty years ago, the author felt the want of a work like that now offered to the public in the following pages;"—and he presents to us the results of his learning in an infinite number of facts and reasonings collected in his very extensive reading, and watchful observation. The object he has had in view was to shew, that the relation Moses gives of the creation of the different elements of our globe, the formation of light, heat, the heavenly bodies, vegetables, and lastly, man himself, are all fully and exactly corroborated by the discoveries of the "reasoned science, and of the varied knowledge and enlightened investigation of the times we live in." He has succeeded in this most admirably, and with the number of very interesting facts which he produces from the stores of modern science, every one must be both gratified and instructed. With these feelings fresh upon us we felt shocked and pained to find in the few last pages, that Mr. Turner's views of human action, "of the deterioration of human nature," as he calls the fall of man, were so contrary to the kind views of God's Providence, which we think we can see even in His permission of the existence of evil; and we longed to send him for his perusal the invaluable book of Dr. Southwood Smith, on Divine government. His words are p. 520. "We now approach the deterioration of human nature; the defection of man from his creator; the assertion of human independence; the rejection of all other control; the reign of self-will; the refusal of self-government; the preference of self-indulgence to self-restraint; the dislike of a moral superior, and of a commanding legislator; the alienation of the human heart from its God, and the *persevering tendency* of the human mind to obey no invisible Lord; the devotion of the spirit to its present enjoyments, and a disregard to future conse-

quences; a carelessness of inevitable death, and an indifference or dislike to a future existence beyond it.

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Such a being, man has been ever since his primeval and paradisaical day—such he perseveres to be: and yet a very small use of our reasoning faculties cannot fail to satisfy every candid mind, which covets only the right judgment and the unprejudiced truth, that in such perversity as this he could not have been created. For such a mutilation of that Divine likeness, which he was destined to wear and appointed to acquire, cannot have been pleasing to the Great Perfection, whom he was to resemble. *It is a counteraction of High purposes and a frustration of his designs*—it is the temporary defeat of his gracious purposes in our existence—it is the present triumph of what is most hostile of Him—it is indeed the result, which, as our Milton hath sung,

“ Brought death into the world and all our wo.”

We shall not attempt, at present, a refutation of this error of opinion, but out of his own mouth will we judge him—in page 4 he thus writes:—

“ If our facts and reasonings do not concur, one of these must be erroneous. And as in all revealed truths, what is revealed must be true, if that is found to be at variance with our intellectual deductions, the mistake must be in our reasoning or in our inferences. *While this discrepancy lasts, we may be sure that we have not hit upon the right solution.* However ingenious or plausible our argumentations may be, *we have missed the just theory; we have not found the real key; we have not penetrated to the law and principle from which the revealed facts have proceeded, and from which alone the full comprehension of them can be derived.*”

Cork.

O.

DIVINE INFLUENCE.

(From vol ii. *New Series Unitarian Advocate*, Boston.)

Two essential characteristics of this influence especially deserve notice.

1. It is not irresistible. We can oppose it if we please, we can reject it if we please, we can neutralize it if we please. We can give it more or less weight, as we choose. The instance of Pharaoh, shows how the will of God, revealed through outward events, may be disregarded. The exhortation not to grieve nor quench the holy spirit, teaches us that we may refuse compliance with its instructions. If it be irresistible, man is not a free being, nor is he accountable for a character formed under such an influence. He could be the subject of neither praise nor blame, reward nor punishment, for what he could not avoid nor counteract.

2. Another important truth is, that we cannot distinguish the influence of God, from the other influences of social life, or the exercises of our own minds. I know that many good Christians have believed that they could make the discrimination, and have related the circumstances in which their belief had its origin. But they have been, I apprehend, justly considered enthusiasts. It is manifestly impossible to frame any rules for distinguishing a divine influence amidst the operations of the soul. We may enjoy the presence of God's spirit many times in a day, and for a considerable period, and not be conscious of the fact; for it is blended with other aids to virtue, and consciousness only reveals to us the existence or character, but not the remote origin of our thoughts. The special influence of God upon us is known only through its effects, as we know the influence which the sun has upon the internal structure of a plant only by its effects, in producing growth, beauty, fragrance, and fruit. But what share amidst the other causes of expansion belongs to the luminary, no one is so foolish as to think he can ascertain. So it is with the spiritual and infinite luminary, in regard to agency in the expansion of our souls. Indeed, we should never have learned that God imparts a special influence, if we had not been favoured with revelation. Nature is silent. Providence does not proclaim when the hand of divinity is guiding its movements. Our souls might

have received numberless distributions of light and love from the Creator, and have been ignorant of their obligations, if God had not by revelation given us the knowledge of this precious doctrine.

Reason, however, discovers some probabilities in its favor, and these probabilities, especially when seen as we see them, possessed of a strength borrowed from Christianity, may convince us that this is a reasonable doctrine. It is probable that the Creator takes an interest in his creatures; that having made them for certain ends, he will, if necessary, assist them in securing those ends; and that he has not only established a general government over them, but that he constantly observes them, and according to their exigencies affords them the means of progress. All this is probable from the fact, that he called a race of moral beings into existence, and from the indistinct disclosures of his character, made by natural religion. How much stronger is the presumption, when we contemplate the Deity in the exercise of the paternal relation, as he is shown to us by Jesus Christ. It seems to me in the highest degree improbable, that such a Being should fix certain principles on which the creation might, and would control itself, and should virtually dissolve his connexion with his creatures. I should be as ready to believe that a human father would establish certain rules for his family, and then cease to maintain intercourse with them. Again we feel the need of such a doctrine. We cannot be insensible to our own weakness. The soul desires some higher spirit from which it may draw supplies of strength. We are ignorant, frail, tempted, harassed. It is not sufficient to tell us that the universe is so constituted, that, if we use the utmost of our ability, we shall continually advance in excellence. Our hearts demand something more. They ask for a present and assisting God. They wish to be assured that their own ability is not their only resource, but that they will receive help in seasons of difficulty and distress. This universal sentiment, reason admits as testimony in support of the doctrine.

But it is said that the doctrine of divine influence impairs moral freedom. This is the objection most frequently urged; and yet, as it seems to me without the

least propriety. Let me repeat what I have already said, that this influence, so far as it acts directly on our spiritual nature, is confined to the office of presenting motives. This office it executes in various ways ; but it extends no farther than to put before the mind incitements or dissuasives, in respect to a particular act or course of conduct. Does it cause this act or course to seem painful or pleasant, wise or unwise ? Does it exhibit its character, or disclose its effects ? Does it unveil the odious features of sin ? Does it open new paths to the knowledge of God, or suggest a better acquaintance with one's self ? Still all these intimations and disclosures operate on the mind, only in the capacity of motives, precisely as if they came from human lips. Now, moral freedom, as I understand it, results from the ability of estimating motives, more or less according to their true value, as we please ; that is, of determining what motives we will obey. There is, therefore, no interference with our liberty, as moral agents, in the offering of motives, which, by a depreciation of their character, we may deprive of their intended influence over the will. Nor is there, in regard to the necessary effect, any difference between the introduction of ideas into the mind by God, and their introduction by man. God never forces the will, even by a miracle. Witness the example of Judas, who, though he beheld the miraculous attestation which Jesus gave to the divinity of his mission, and listened to truths, the knowledge of which was as miraculous a possession as the power of raising the dead, yet preferred a paltry sum of money to fidelity. Imagine not that God suspends for a moment moral freedom. No ; he might sooner extinguish the principle of vitality that pervades the universe ; he would not more effectually counteract his own government, or betray his own character. Man is free to believe and obey, or to reject and disregard, though God is always working in him, both to will and to do, of his good pleasure.

Still the truth of this doctrine, as has been hinted, must be established by an appeal to revelation. And the proof drawn from this source is conclusive. Intimations, not faint, are found in the Old Testament, particularly in the devotional parts. But in the New

Testament it shines in full lustre. It appears as the theme of discourse with Christ and his Apostles, in private conversation, and in public teaching; in the extemporaneous address, and in the elaborate epistle. In what affecting language is it presented by our Lord! "If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the holy spirit to them that ask him." I am not aware that any article of the Christian faith is more frequently brought into notice by the writers of the New Testament, than this. In the various forms in which we have considered it, it was a familiar subject of contemplation and remark with them. They attributed our progress in excellence to God, as the Author of our being. They trace every christian virtue to Him, as through Christ, the source of faith and strength. And they again and again appear to me to speak of a direct influence, exerted by the Deity on the human soul,—in accordance with its perfect freedom, but still with the design of producing repentance and holiness. It is not easy in all, nor perhaps in most instances, to determine the particular mode of the divine agency, intended by the writer, and often they were all present to his mind, and the effects of their co-operation were signified by the terms, the Spirit, the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit. An argument of considerable weight may be drawn from the offices of devotion. We are taught to pray for God's spirit, for his assistance, his influence. If such directions do not involve the doctrine, that we may receive special aid from the Being to whom we address our supplications, are they not worse than nugatory! They lead us to expect what cannot be enjoyed; to ask for that which will not be given. If this view of prayer be correct, the proof of a positive divine influence, bestowed at different times and in various measures, is complete. With those who hold other notions of prayer, this argument may have little force; but they who interpret this service as I do, will feel the necessity of believing both in a particular providence, and in a special influence of the divine spirit.

As the first benefit which accrues from this doctrine, I should therefore name its relation to prayer, to which it gives a meaning, a force, an intensity, that it can

have on no other theory. In the next place, I would notice the sense of intimacy between our Creator and ourselves, which it produces. We are brought to feel our dependence on God for spiritual blessings, and to acknowledge Him in all the concerns of the religious life. To him we are indebted for every good impulse; the thought of him is associated with every virtuous effort; he is the spring and support of all excellence. We may adopt the sentiment which the Apostle uttered respecting the early preachers of the Gospel, "Our sufficiency is of God."

Another benefit flowing from this doctrine, is the comfort which it gives to them who are in any kind of trouble. To the solitary and afflicted, to the anxious and distressed, to the humble and penitent; to them who feel their weakness and lament their folly, the sentiment on which I have dwelt comes as a voice from Heaven to encourage and solace them. It tells them, that though feeble in themselves they are mighty through Him who strengthened them; though oppressed, they are upheld; though alone, they are not without a friend who will supply all their wants; though sinful, they may be forgiven and sanctified. It lifts the soul to God; it makes a sanctuary for God in the soul; it silences complaint, assuages grief, and leads the contrite offender to the Being in whom alone is hope. It makes heaven on earth.

Finally, this doctrine is of great value, as it gives a solemn interest to all the circumstances of life, and all the exercises of our souls. Trifle not,—is its exhortation—with the events of your existence, however trivial they may appear. God may be speaking to you through them. Examine them with a deeper reverence than you would search papers written by a loved and departed friend, for they may contain lessons of heavenly wisdom. Trifle not, oh trifle not with your own consciousness. Let not holy thoughts pass idly from your minds. They may be inspirations of the Deity.



THE DISTRIBUTION OF LIFE.

It appears to me that our Maker intended the objects of our study and exertions to expand as we grow in years: of course the most advantageous disposition of our time is to proceed upon this plan, and an inversion of it would produce the same confusion, that a preposterous derangement of any other business usually occasions. It would entangle a man in laborious, impracticable, and unprofitable schemes; and his life would resemble a troubled sea, instead of that beautiful picture so well described by the philosophical poet.

“Self-love but serves the virtuous mind to wake,
As the small pebble stirs the peaceful lake:
The centre moved, a circle straight succeeds,
Another still, and still another spreads:
Friend, parent, neighbour first it will embrace;
His country next, and next all human race:
Wide and more wide th’ o’erflowings of the mind,
Take every creature in, of every kind:
Earth smiles around with boundless bounty blest,
And Heaven beholds its image in his breast.”

1. In the earlier portion of life, a young person is incapable of being materially useful to others. That he may become serviceable to the world, he must begin by confining his attention to himself. In this season, those valuable qualities must be acquired, which will qualify him for beneficial exertions of virtue, generosity, and wisdom in future life. He might as well attempt to exercise generosity before he had acquired money, as to improve the world by his virtue or knowledge, before he had learned either himself. The grand occupation, therefore, of this period is to accumulate all the means of future usefulness; and this can be done only by improving in knowledge or virtue.

He should neglect no opportunity of acquiring every kind of useful knowledge; and considering the impossibility of guessing what situation of life he may be thrown into, or what emergencies may arise in that situation, he should understand this precept in its largest sense. Though that species of information which contributes to the increase of a man’s fortune, be necessary to extend the sphere of his future usefulness, it is a point of which men are so generally convinced, that I shall not dwell on it at present. I shall also decline to enlarge

upon the advantage of liberal science and literary taste ; though they also tend greatly to increase a man's influence in society, and consequently afford great scope for the exertion of virtue.

His principal occupation should be to acquire an accurate knowledge, and firm conviction of moral and religious truth ; and to addict himself to the study of such books, and an attendance upon such religious services, as will render this knowledge and conviction habitual. Without habit his knowledge will be of little avail. As in the affairs of the world, it is not sufficient for a man to know his business, except by habit he has acquired the faculty of performing it with celerity and dexterity ; so in morals and religion, we must not be content with barely knowing our duty, we must be in the habit of performing it : we must not be under a necessity of entering upon a train of argument every time we are called upon to discharge our duty, or to act from any particular principle. We must have that habitual knowledge of rectitude, and such a permanent conviction of religious truth, that we shall not hesitate in deciding upon any question, that may come before us in our intercourse with the world : and we must be so accustomed to act from principle, that we shall receive pleasure from complying with conscience, and feel pain and remorse when we deviate from the will of God.— This is the great business of our early years. If we make this use of the first period of life, its subsequent periods will be respectable and decided. If we neglect this at the proper season, we shall not easily find time for such studies afterwards ; or if we should, we shall not come to the consideration of these subjects with that unbiassed mind, which constitutes the peculiar felicity of youth. This is the time for laying the foundation of a respectable character ; not by action, but by study. Too early an intrusion into active life tends to rob the youthful mind of that impartiality, which I have just mentioned as its peculiar advantage ; to divert it from those subjects of thought, and those branches of study, which are essential to future eminence ; and often by some imprudent step to contaminate and embitter the whole stream and course of life.

2. The next stage is that, in which a young man is called upon to act for others ; and the peculiar business

of this delicate situation is to put in practice those principles and habits of religion and virtue, which he had learned and contracted in the former period. If he has not been thoroughly grounded in these good practices, he will easily be led astray; and by some irregularity will blast the hopes of his future life. If he acquit himself to the satisfaction of his employer, he will enter upon life with confidence in himself, and encouragement and assistance from others. This season is a praxis, or exercise upon his former education. It will be easy or difficult, creditable or disgraceful, according to the diligence with which he has prepared for it. His chief attention is still to be paid to himself, that he may afterwards be better qualified and enabled to do good to others. Not only his worldly prosperity; but more particularly his character, his duty, the purity of his mind, and the uprightness of his conduct, are the appropriate business of this season. The time for general and public activity is not yet arrived. His attention should be still confined to the business of his employer. The only attachments beyond this, that should occupy his mind, are duty to his parents, affection for his relatives, and the formation of friendships. The two first are calculated to preserve him amiable and innocent, as well as to make him happy; and the formation of friendships is the most delicate and important act, to which he has as yet been called. It is indeed an affair of singular moment; but attended with little danger comparatively, to one who has followed the course already pointed out. If he take care to attach himself only to those who have laid a foundation similar to his own, the connexion will be lasting, beneficial, and a source of delight. Two such friends can hardly fail to promote each other's interest and improvement. They will encourage and fortify each other in danger, temptation and calamity; and in prosperity, their pleasures will be doubled by participation. On the other hand one great evil attending early neglect of Virtue and Religion, is the danger of forming ruinous connexions; which will have an effect directly contrary to that which I have just now described, by doubling their danger instead of their safety, and their calamities instead of their prosperity.

This is the season, when men are most strongly tempted to unlawful pleasure, and most easily seduced

with sins and crimes of a yet deeper die. If a man pollute his youth with intemperance and licentiousness, how soon does the beauty of that age decay ! Instead of enjoying the health, strength and beauty natural to that period of life, he quickly becomes sickly, deformed and decrepid. Instead of rejoicing in the cheerfulness and innocence, which render a virtuous youth the object of esteem and love, he labours under the pressure of guilt and shame ; and is enveloped in a gloom of discontent and despondence, occasioned by regret for past follies, and by the neglect and contempt of friends, who would wish to behold him with looks of affection and esteem. In such a miserable degree does vice deface the comeliness of youth ; and destroy the genuine pleasures of the young ; though for a time the stings of conscience may be eluded by the gaiety and versatility of their disposition. But this gay and thoughtless season will soon elapse, and never again return ; and the more that vicious inclinations are indulged, the sooner will it pass away. When once gone, it will be succeeded by an anticipated old age, when the senses will be incapable of tasting pleasure ; the body be tortured with disease, and an irritated and offended conscience add poignancy to every pang. With what a different grace do the virtuous and pious pass through life, enjoying a happy and protracted youth, blessed with every generous affection and lovely disposition, and crowned with lasting and deserved applause ; to be followed by a happy and respected age, adorned with wisdom, piety and benevolence, till the hoary head be transformed into a crown of glory.

The pleasures of riot and dissipation are impositions put upon the understanding by appetite and passion ; cheats discovered, as soon as the person recovers from their delusive influence, and no sooner discovered than bitterly bewailed. Their natural attendants are sickness, repentance and shame ; followed often by atrocious crimes and the ruin of families. What madness is it, to snatch the reins from reason, and deliver them into the hands of licentious passion ! Great should be the enjoyment arising from vice, since for it every other must be resigned ; health, peace and conscious innocence ; the friendship of the wise and good ; and the affection of the amiable and kind.

3. In the third period of life a man is called upon to act for himself and his family. If he has attended to the advice already given, his character will be so formed, that he will be in little danger of committing any crime, indulging in any vice, or being betrayed into any conduct, unworthy of a Christian: and in point of worldly circumstances he will be well prepared to undertake the charge of a family. With respect to his own character, the only particular that will give him any trouble, is his temper: and now that his tender and intimate connections are increased, as well as his commerce with mankind in general, this becomes a matter of great importance. Happiness depends more upon temper than on genius or knowledge; upon tranquillity and cheerfulness more than on riches or splendour; and on minute comforts rather than great events. It becomes more and more necessary in proportion to the intimacy of the connexions which we form; and therefore is most necessary in the domestic relation. In public our ill-humour may be concealed, or indulged with impunity, and treated with contempt: but in domestic society, it can neither escape observation, nor fail to make ourselves and every one around us unhappy. As therefore the peculiar business of this season of life is to render all the members of our household happy, good temper becomes a quality of great importance.

Society is so constituted, that a certain degree of property, proportioned to our rank, if not essential, is at least eminently conducive to happiness; and without my recommendation, this will be sufficiently attended to. It is perhaps more necessary to give a caution against excessive anxiety on this point. We should certainly be solicitous to obtain for our families the means of comfortable subsistence, and of good education; but we should guard against the ambition of elevating them to a higher rank than is necessary to comfort, virtue, piety, and a moderate leisure for cultivating the more elegant qualities of mind; and from the time that their subsistence is secured, we should appropriate a portion of our wealth to the relief of the poor, relying on Providence for those comforts, which are not indispensably necessary to life and godliness. One reason among others, for this early exercise of charity is,

that, were it to be deferred till all our desires were satisfied, it would probably be neglected altogether.

Thus our circle of duty gradually extends, embracing at this period our personal interest, spiritual and temporal; the temporal and eternal concerns of our own families, and the urgent necessities of the poor. 'Till these objects are tolerably provided for, we should decline any further extension of our exertions; guard against dissipating our faculties and our benevolence upon a variety of unattainable objects; and flattering ourselves with speculative excellence to the neglect of practical virtue. Nor will any one complain that this sphere of duty, is too circumscribed, who has a just idea of the important station filled by the heads of families, both in a civil and a religious point of view.

4. When these duties have been performed, a fourth period of life will commence, when we may allow a freer range to our virtuous dispositions. The peculiar business of this portion of life is the assistance of our friends and worthy neighbours with our money, influence, and advice; the support and management of charitable and other public institutions; the promotion of peace, industry, and religion in our vicinity; and finally, the maintenance of the general prosperity, morals, and liberty of our country. Some of these are in the power of every man of good character: others require a greater degree of influence, property, and ability; yet, perhaps, every man who has reputably passed through the preceding stages, will at some time of life find himself qualified to discharge in a certain degree every one of those important functions, and to fill a respectable situation in society. At all events his example and conversation cannot fail to be serviceable to the community, and to draw notice and respect upon himself and his family.

But here as well as in the former stages, a man must take care not to speculate beyond his means, even in virtue. As in the earlier periods of life he should confine his exertions and views to the appropriate business of each season; so now, that he has arrived at the last period of active life, he should proportion them to his means, his property, his abilities, his knowledge, experience, and rank. A consideration of these will point out to a sensible, modest man, the objects on which he should employ himself; and by restraining his activity

within those limits which his talents and situation qualify him for filling, he will not only more effectually promote his own happiness, but will also be most serviceable to any good cause, that he may have at heart.

Such a man will be qualified to adorn every relation in life, and to fulfil and gratify the expectations of all his connections. His humane, placid, and gentle temper will adorn the domestic circle, while his industry and temperance will provide for their ease and comfort. His children, treated with indulgence in their earliest years, educated in the principles and practice of purity, and trained to useful industry, will be the support and comfort of his age, and bear with the infirmities incident to the decline of life, while his yoke-fellows will help him to bear his burden down the hill, mindful of his uniform affection, confidence, and constancy.

5. The last period of life is old age. The most suitable occupation of this season is to review calmly and dispassionately the portions of time that are past, to improve by our own experience and make others the better of our reflections, by redressing any injuries we may have occasioned, and supplying those omissions of which we may have been guilty. This is the season for rectifying our errors, improving in virtue, and completing our character; that we may not leave behind us the reproach of one of the Jewish kings, that "he departed without being regretted;" or be called to give an account to our master before we have finished the work which he gave us to do.

After this enumeration of duties, the only point remaining is the principle or motive from which they should be performed. This is a matter of great importance, not only because our duty will be better fulfilled, if we are prompted to it by a worthy and potent motive, but also because the morality of the action and the value of the character depend upon our principles of action.

In all true and just philosophy as well as in the Christian religion, the motive is the circumstance principally considered. The Gospel does not dwell minutely on the ceremonies of religion, but on the love and fear of God; on the love of our neighbour, and not on the particular manner in which we should

demonstrate this affection. Demonstrations of affection would be nothing better than flattery or deceit, if unattended with the principle of brotherly love; and without divine love the offices of religion would be only a pompous display of hypocrisy. Whereas if these sentiments are pure and strong, they will infallibly produce their natural effects, whenever the means and opportunities are presented; and when any insuperable obstacle prevents their operation, they are still amiable, virtuous, and meritorious.

The grand principles of Christian conduct are those just mentioned, though in fact they may be reduced to one: for our duty to man results immediately from our relations to God. We should look up to him in every action of our lives. He has made us subject to be influenced by many subordinate motives: he has graciously supplied us in every relation of life with many persuasive adducements to well-doing: and I trust will not condemn us for seeking consolation, support, and gratification, even in the love of praise and the fear of blame, and other inferior motives; but these are to be used with caution and circumspection; they are to be checked and restrained within proper limits, and frequently compared with sublimer considerations. They are never to be the main-springs of our conduct. They are steps and degrees by which we should rise to the contemplation of the divine will. They are rounds in the ladder of spiritual ambition, which we trample under foot, and leave behind our backs as we climb to the summit of perfection; and when the spiritually minded man has attained the topmost rounds, he scorns the low degrees by which he did ascend.

Thus in early youth we should practice holiness and purity, because it is the will of God, that we should become holy as he is holy, perfect as he is perfect, pure as he is pure.

In the service of others, we should act as in the presence of him who is invisible; as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from our hearts; not with eye-service as men pleasers, but as servants of God.

In the conduct of a family, we should be anxious to imitate the father of all the families of the earth; walk within our dwellings with perfect hearts; train up our

children in the way they should go ; rear our household to his praise and glory and the furtherance of his will.

In the more enlarged and miscellaneous transactions of riper years, we should be particularly anxious to square our actions by the will of God ; and be particularly fearful of conforming to the vices and vanities of the world. And the closing period of life should be spent in comparing the whole of our former conduct with that standard, and rectifying those particulars in which we have deviated from it. NEMO.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE BIBLE CHRISTIAN.]

HINTS ON THE NECESSITY FOR A NEW PLACE OF WORSHIP IN BELFAST, TO BE ESTABLISHED ON REMONSTRANT PRINCIPLES, *AND UNCONNECTED WITH REGIUM DONUM*, ADDRESSED TO LIBERAL CHRISTIANS OF ALL DENOMINATIONS.

SIR,—PERMIT me to address my fellow-townsmen through the medium of your valuable religious publication on a subject which concerns the moral advancement of the community. At a time when *the working classes* in our hitherto peaceful town, are characterized by irregularities and atrocities unparalleled in our history, permit me to introduce the observations which I intend to make on this subject, by a few notices concerning the “Sabbath Evening Service especially intended for the benefit of *the working classes* in Belfast,” which was commenced on the 20th Jan. and which will be conducted by the Students of Divinity belonging to the Remonstrant Synod and Presbytery of Antrim, at the Old Library, No. 1, Talbot-street. This series of interesting services was opened by a very appropriate discourse from the words in Mathew’s Gospel: “the poor have the Gospel preached to them.” There was a numerous attendance, including persons of almost every rank and denomination. At the succeeding services, the attendance has been steadily on the increase.

From the appearance of such an auditory as assembled on this occasion, as well as from the observations of many of my friends with whom I have lately been conversing, it would appear, that the time has arrived,

when the moral wants of the community seem to demand an additional house of worship in Belfast, based on a *less extravagant*, and yet on a *more liberal* foundation than that of any of the gorgeous fabrics which, of late years, have been reared, as the *monuments* of an exceedingly bad Presbyterian taste, and the *last receptacles*, we trust, of a far worse theology.

The time has arrived when Christianity, in such a town as Belfast, ought to be tried on its own intrinsic merits; when a plan for the formation of a congregation of Christians, on Remonstrant principles, ought to be immediately drawn out, and as soon as possible matured. The mania for a nominal Orthodoxy has in part subsided, since the *late grants of Government bounty*; and the *Regium Donum*, while it has lulled the clamors of an avaricious ministry, has cooled the attachment of many of the warmest friends of the redoubted and reverend *watchmen*.

Many of the most respectable members of the established Church, from the progress of enlightened opinion, in reference to the unhappy union which has so long subsisted between Church and State, and in reference to the galling chains which have pressed so hardly on them in the form of ecclesiastical domination, as well as from the just objections that begin now to be generally entertained against an antiquated and incoherent liturgy, I say, many members of the Establishment, would hail with joy the prospect of a *Free and Independent and Scriptural Church*, such as that which we contemplate, and would aid in forwarding the good work.

There is a class of my fellow-townsmen also, which I ought not to pass over, and which would rejoice, perhaps, more than any other, in a *less expensive and less dogmatical* exhibition of Christianity, than that which characterizes the general preaching of the Gospel in Belfast. I mean the class of respectable artisans, and those engaged in the minor departments of trade. The enormous expenditure incurred in the building of the great Trinitarian meeting houses in town, has signally interfered with their christian utility. It is only persons of a certain rank who can purchase seats in them and pay a large annual stipend; all others who cannot exactly afford such a sum out of their limited earnings

must attend as *paupers*. There are places, no doubt, appointed for the *poor* in these houses; but there are great numbers of artisans, who though not competent to pay for seats at an extravagant rate, would yet be exceedingly happy to pay for them according to their means: nay, they would take a new interest in their religion, when they found that they stood on the same level with their fellow Christians. The fact is, from ideas of a decent independence, which ought perhaps to be fostered, they do not wish to be numbered among *mendicants*. The class of liberal and intelligent artisans there, would be greatly advanced in their moral condition, by having a plain and practical and economical view of Christianity laid before them, free from the technicalities, and the expensive accompaniments of a scholastic theology. One of the most flourishing congregations in London at the present time, is composed for the most part of the class to which we have referred, and is based on the principles which we advocate.

The constant immigration to Belfast, of families and individuals from different parts of the country, offers another source of accession to the enlightened part of the community. Persons brought up in the country with liberal views of Christianity, find it almost impossible on their settlement in town, to obtain seats in either the first or second Presbyterian congregations; and after attending for a time, on sufferance, at different places of worship, are in the end carried away by their acquaintance to some of the reputedly Orthodox houses, or perhaps they give up public worship altogether. I could point out several instances of this kind: such instances surely demand the consideration of enlightened laymen, as well as of ministers.

From all these sources which we have enumerated—sources not certainly of wealth, but sources full of intelligence and moral power—I have not a doubt that a numerous congregation could be formed in a very short time. The pre-disposition of the public mind fully warrants our most sanguine expectations. We only want the first impulse to set our moral engineery in motion. A comfortable house could be erected for 500*l*. which would fully answer our present economical views. I have known as large sums subscribed in the counting-house of one of

my friends, on a morning. The first gentleman to whom I mentioned this subject, said he would give 50*l.* himself.

A Remonstrant church, founded on the principles of *the sufficiency of Scripture, the right of private judgment, and the rejection of human authority in matters of faith*, without the adjunct of *Royal Bounty*, or the interference of *ecclesiastical confederacies*, would bid fair to give Christianity a chance of being exhibited on its own merits; and that portion of the community who seem to stand most in need of the consolations and the enlightenment of religion, would find that Unitarianism, by its Scriptural simplicity, by the kind and charitable spirit which it breathes, is eminently adapted to their wants; and that sentiment so full of benevolent import—"The poor have the *gospel* preached to them," would be amply realised, by the *good tidings* which would be universally disseminated.

Let a meeting then be called at a convenient period in the rooms, No. 1, Talbot-street, and let a number of individuals of every denomination, the poor as well as the rich, be invited to attach their names to a paper sanctioning the proposed measure. When our plan of operation has been well digested, the subscriptions can be raised in a very short time indeed. The worthy ministers of the first and second congregations will lend their aid, and I should hope to see, by the blessing of Almighty God, in the course of the next summer, a flourishing church in the town of Belfast. PHILOLAOS.

[The Editor of the Bible Christian publishes the foregoing paper exactly as it has been furnished to him by his Correspondent; but desires it to be understood, that there are some parts of it in which he does not concur. For instance, if a new congregation be established in Belfast, on the principle of non-subscription to human creeds, can any valid reason be assigned for declining to connect it with the Antrim Presbytery, to which the other Congregations in the town, holding similar sentiments, are attached? If such reason be assigned, can it be expected that the ministers or members of the First and Second Congregations will very zealously exert themselves in order to promote the establishment of a society, which even while in the act of seeking their co-operation, would declare them unfit to be intrusted with the power of tendering their friendly advice and services, as a religious body? Would it not be the wisest and best plan, to leave to the members of the New Congregation, after it has been formed, the selection of that religious body with which they may choose to connect themselves—if they think it necessary to con-

nect themselves with any? These, however, are mere matters of detail. No person more deeply feels the importance of the main object recommended in the communication of Philolaos,—more earnestly desires it,—or would more strenuously labour to effect it, than

THE EDITOR OF THE BIBLE CHRISTIAN.

REVIEW.

Domestic Manners of the Americans. By Mrs. Trollope, 2 vols. 12mo.

THESE volumes are the production of a person who evidently writes with no friendly feeling for the Americans; and who judges of them by an unfair standard. Because Mrs. Trollope did not find in certain parts of the United States the same conventional rules of politeness established, which custom has sanctioned in the old world, she leaves the reader to infer that the whole nation is destitute of refinement and almost of civilization. If the same test were applied to European Society, the result might be equally unfavourable; for there is no society in the world in which individuals may not be found who forget, overlook, or despise those petty forms on which Mrs. Trollope lays so much stress. If all such instances were treasured up in the memory, carefully recorded in the note-book, and afterwards published to the world, by any satirical tourist, accompanied with severe and caustic remarks, the most *exclusive* of those circles whose fiat seems to be the highest authority with Mrs. Trollope, might be made to appear in a very ridiculous light. All this too might be done without any positive violation of truth. It only requires a judicious selection, from among the mass, of such examples as may best suit the Author's views. It is in this manner that we suspect Mrs. Trollope has proceeded, at least in some instances.

We refer to these volumes, however, less for the purpose of animadverting on their general contents, than of laying before our readers the following description of an American Revival, by an *eye-witness*.

“We had not been many months in Cincinnati when our curiosity was excited by hearing the “revival” talked of by every one we met throughout the town. “The revival will be very full”—“We shall be constantly engaged during the revival”—were the

phrases we continually heard repeated, and for a long time without in the least comprehending what was meant ; but at length I learnt that the un-national church of America required to be roused, at regular intervals, to greater energy and exertion. At these seasons the most enthusiastic of the clergy travel the country, and enter the cities and towns by scores, or by hundreds, as the accommodation of the place may admit, and for a week or fortnight, or if the population be large, for a month, they preach and pray all day, and often for a considerable portion of the night, in the various churches and chapels of the place. This is called a Revival.

I took considerable pains to obtain information on this subject ; but in detailing what I learnt, I fear that it is probable that I shall be accused of exaggeration ; all I can do is cautiously to avoid deserving it. The subject is highly interesting, and it would be a fault of no trifling nature to treat it with levity.

The itinerant clergymen are of all persuasions, I believe, except the Episcopalian, Catholic, Unitarian, and Quaker. I heard of Presbyterians of all varieties ; of Baptists of I know not how many divisions ; and of Methodists of more denominations than I can remember ; whose innumerable shades of varying belief, it would require much time to explain, and more to comprehend. They enter all the cities, towns, and villages of the Union in succession ; I could not learn with sufficient certainty to repeat, what the interval generally is between their visits. These itinerants are, for the most part, lodged in the houses of their respective followers, and every evening that is not spent in the churches and meeting-houses, is devoted to what would be called parties by others, but which they designate as prayer-meetings. Here they eat, drink, pray, sing, hear confessions, and make converts. To these meetings I never got invited, and therefore I have nothing but hear-say evidence to offer ; but my information comes from an eye-witness, and one on whom I believe I may depend. If one half of what I heard may be believed, these social prayer-meetings are by no means the least curious, or the least important part of the business.

It is impossible not to smile at the close resemblance to be traced between the feelings of a first-rate Presbyterian or Methodist lady, fortunate enough to have secured a favourite Itinerant for her meeting, and those of a first-rate London Blue, equally blest in the presence of a fashionable poet. There is a strong family likeness among us all the world over.

The best rooms, the best dresses, the choicest refreshments solemnize the meeting. While the party is assembling, the load-star of the hour is occupied in whispering conversations with the guests as they arrive. They are called brothers and sisters, and the greetings are very affectionate. When the room is full, the company, of whom a vast majority are always women, are invited, intreated, and coaxed to confess before their brothers and sisters, all their thoughts, faults, and follies.

These confessions are strange scenes ; the more they confess, the more invariably are they encouraged and caressed. When this is over, they all kneel, and the Itinerant prays extempore. They

then eat and drink ; and then they sing hymns, pray, exhort, sing, and pray again, till the excitement reaches a very high pitch indeed. These scenes are going on at some house or other every evening during the revival, nay, at many at the same time, for the churches and meeting-houses cannot give occupation to half the Itinerants, though they are all open throughout the day, and till a late hour in the night, and the officiating ministers succeed each other in the occupation of them.

It was at the principal of the Presbyterian churches that I was twice witness to the scenes that made me shudder ; in describing one, I describe both, and every one ; the same thing is constantly repeated.

It was in the middle of summer, but the service we were recommended to attend did not begin till it was dark. The church was well lighted, and crowded almost to suffocation. On entering, we found three priests standing side by side, in a sort of tribune, placed where the altar usually is, handsomely fitted up with crimson curtains, and elevated about as high as our pulpits. We took our places in a pew close to the rail which surrounded it.

The priest, who stood in the middle, was praying ; the prayer was extremely vehement, and offensively familiar in expression ; when this ended, a hymn was sung, and then another priest took the centre place and preached. The sermon had considerable eloquence, but of a frightful kind. The preacher described, with ghastly minuteness, the last feeble fainting moments of human life, and the gradual progress of decay after death, which he followed through every process up to the last loathsome stage of decomposition. Suddenly changing his tone, which had been that of sober accurate description, into the shrill voice of horror, he bent forward his head, as if to gaze upon some object beneath the pulpit. And as Rebecca made known to Ivanhoe what she saw through the window, so the preacher made known to us what he saw in the pit that seemed to open before him. The device was certainly a happy one for giving effect to his description of hell. No image that fire, flame, brimstone, molten lead, or red-hot pincers could supply ; with flesh, nerves, and sinews quivering under them, was omitted. The perspiration ran in streams from the face of the preacher ; his eyes rolled, his lips were covered with foam, and every feature had the deep expression of horror it would have borne, had he, in truth, been gazing at the scene he described. The acting was excellent. At length he gave a languishing look to his supporters on each side, as if to express his feeble state, and then sat down, and wiped the drops of agony from his brow.

The other two priests arose and began to sing a hymn. It was some seconds before the congregation could join as usual ; every up-turned face looked pale and horror-struck. When the singing ended, another took the centre place, and began in a sort of coaxing affectionate tone, to ask the congregation if what their dear brother had spoken had reached their hearts ? Whether they would avoid the hell he had made them see ? " Come, then ! " he continued, stretching out his arms towards them, " come to us, and

tell us so, and we will make ye see Jesus, the dear, gentle Jesus, who shall save you from it. But you must come to him! You must not be ashamed to come to him! This night you shall tell him you are not ashamed of him; he will make way for you; we will clear the bench for anxious sinners to sit upon. Come, then! come to the anxious bench, and we will show you Jesus! Come! Come! Come!"

Again a hymn was sung, and while it continued, one of the three was employed in clearing one or two long benches that went across the rail, sending the people back to the lower part of the church. The singing ceased, and again the people were invited and exhorted not to be ashamed of Jesus, but to put themselves upon "the anxious benches," and lay their heads upon his bosom. "Once more we will sing," he concluded, "that we may give you time." And again they sung a hymn.

And now in every part of the church a movement was perceptible, slight at first, but by degrees becoming more decided. Young girls arose, and sat down, and arose again; and then the pews opened, and several came trotting out, their hands clasped, their heads hanging on their bosoms, and every limb trembling, and still the hymn went on; but as the poor creatures approached the rail, their sobs and groans became more audible. They seated themselves on the "anxious benches;" the hymn ceased, and two of the three priests walked down from the tribune, and going, one to the right, and the other to the left, began whispering to the poor tremblers seated there. These whispers were inaudible to us, but the sobs and groans increased to a frightful excess. Young creatures with features pale and distorted, fell on their knees on the pavement, and soon sunk forward on their faces; the most violent cries and shrieks followed, while from time to time a voice was heard in convulsive accents, exclaiming, "Oh Lord!" "Oh Lord Jesus!" "Help me, Jesus!" and the like.

Meanwhile the two priests continued to walk among them; they repeatedly mounted on the benches, and trumpet-mouthed proclaimed to the whole congregation, "the tidings of salvation," and then from every corner of the building arose in reply, short sharp cries of 'Amen!' 'Glory!' 'Amen!' while the prostrate penitents continued to receive whispered comfortings, and from time to time a mystic caress. More than once I saw a young neck encircled by a reverend arm. Violent hystericks and convulsions seized many of them, and when the tumult was at the highest, the priest who remained above, again gave out a hymn as if to drown it.

It was a frightful sight to behold innocent young creatures, in the gay morning of existence, thus seized upon, horror-struck, and rendered feeble and enervated for ever. One young girl, apparently not more than fourteen, was supported in the arms of another some years older; her face was pale as death; her eyes wide open, and perfectly devoid of meaning; her chin and bosom wet with slaver; she had every appearance of idiotism. I saw a priest approach her, he took her delicate hand, "Jesus is with her! Bless the lord!" he said, and passed on.

Did the men of America value their women as men ought to value their wives and daughters, would such scenes be permitted among them?

It is hardly necessary to say, that all who obeyed the call to place themselves on the "anxious benches" were women, and by far the greater number very young women. The congregation was, in general, extremely well dressed, and the smartest and most fashionable ladies of the town were there; during the whole revival, the churches and meeting-houses were every day crowded with well-dressed people.

It is thus the ladies of Cincinnati amuse themselves: to attend the theatre is forbidden; to play cards is unlawful; but they work hard in their families, and must have some relaxation. For myself, I confess that I think the coarsest comedy ever written would be a less detestable exhibition for the eyes of youth and innocence than such a scene."

It would be easy to multiply quotations and authorities on the plan and procedure of the religious revivals in America to the same effect as the foregoing.—From all quarters whence accounts have reached us, we hear of similar transactions on such occasions. All bear the impress of excitement, enthusiasm; or, as Dr. Beecher expresses it, *insanity*. It would be tedious and disgusting to enlarge upon all the details that have been furnished to us. One circumstance, however, we feel impelled to publish, because it may serve as a warning to those persons in Ireland who may be disposed to look upon the schemes now in agitation, with something like approval; and because it may render them more cautious how far they may favour the progress of revivals. It has been stated, on unquestionable authority, that an eminent revivalist minister, entered into a *boarding-school for young ladies*; assembled the pupils in the school-room; classified and arranged them on different benches, according to their presumed character as "*converted*," "*anxious*," or "*unconcerned*;" addressed them in language supposed to be suited to their respective states;—held them up as examples or warnings to each other; pointing out the "*converts*" as objects of emulation to the "*anxious*," and these in their turn to the "*unconcerned*;" and scattered among them congratulations, warnings and denunciations, with a desperate freedom and terrible effect. This was the mental discipline applied to the tender and susceptible minds of girls be-

tween the ages of twelve and sixteen,—at a distance from their parents, and other relatives,—deprived of that aid in the regulation of the feelings, which is afforded by domestic affection,—and controlled by no other than professional superintendence! There were tears and sighs and groans enough to break the hearts of these young and timid females. The whole school was convulsed with raptures and with agonies. The minister gained an increase of credit by this display of his zeal: but it is not too much to assert that many of his auditory may have suffered an irreparable injury, the consequences of which they may have reason to deplore through life. If revivals be introduced in Belfast, we hope at least that *scenes like this* will be, as much as possible, avoided.

That the consequences of revival agitations have often been injurious to the interests of morality and religion, there is no possibility of doubting; for the fact is proved by unquestionable testimony. Dr. Beecher asserts that “Davenport, disregarding the general consequences of his conduct, and intent only on its immediate result, though he saved a few, doubtless entailed moral desolation and darkness and death, upon thousands of unborn generations.” Beman himself admitted that of 83 persons received into the church at a particular revival in Troy, *forty* afterwards subjected themselves to church censure. The Congregational Magazine, an orthodox publication printed in London, informs us that the town of Northampton in New Hampshire was visited with five revivals, in the course of sixty years; in each of which the majority of the young people in the town were found to be concerned for their eternal salvation. Yet on the death of the former minister, his successor states, that “licentiousness greatly prevailed among the youth in the town: that the youth of both sexes would often spend the greater part of the night in frolics; that their indecency was often apparent in the house of God: and that the town was divided by a spirit of contention.” We are farther informed, that after the last of these harvests “came a far more degenerate time than before.” Revivalism, however, went on as formerly. After one of these periods of excitement, the minister

was informed that some young persons, members of the church, (that is, communicants) "had books in their possession, which they employed to promote lasciviousness, and obscene discourse." On inquiry this report was confirmed; and the delinquents were found to be connected with almost all the families of consequence in the town. As a reward for his diligence in bringing such proceedings to light, this pastor was *dismissed* by his Congregation after serving them as minister for fourteen years!

We are not vain enough to imagine that our Calvinistic friends in this part of the country will pay much attention to warnings coming from a source so suspicious as our miscellany will appear in their eyes. For this reason we have chiefly confined ourselves to facts and statements furnished by orthodox writers in America. With the same view we lay before them the following passage from the pages of the (London) Congregational Magazine, to which we have already referred: and would seriously call on them to pause before they allow themselves to be dragged by a few of their clergy, into measures, the nature of which is studiously kept out of view; and the result of which they cannot foresee.

"They," (the revivalists,) "are so wrapped up in the sovereignty of God, that they cannot even see the responsibility and agency of man. Warm in their imagination, enthusiastic in feeling, supralapsarian in theology, and superior to the trammels of set rules, strict precepts, and systematic means, they live upon novelties and wonders in religious experience. They are longing for miracles and particular revelations. They pore over the prophecies and the high metaphors of scripture with delight, as affording scope to their fancy; and their religion consists for the most part, in the indulgence and the narration of a delightful dream. *What new thing?* is the cry. The ordinary course of events, the steady working of system, of means and of principles, they can neither understand nor appreciate. Hurried along with the popular stream, some more ardent, more ambitious than the rest, would be foremost and uppermost in the tide of enthusiastic feeling and romantic incident; till wearied with excessive

excitement, they sink down for a season into a natural declension, which they bewail as a departure of the Spirit of God, and the hiding of God's countenance! and from which condition they continually sigh and pray to be delivered, by another extraordinary outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Thus do they live in a continual undulation of feeling, emphatically termed experience; to-day elevated with a sense of the sovereign and eternal love of God; to-morrow depressed with dark and gloomy fears."

"All popular excitement connected with religion," says the same writer, "ought to be very carefully analysed. Such an excitement might, without much difficulty, be effected *by design*, among a certain class, and in particular localities. It is favoured by wild, secluded, mountainous scenery. Ignorance, superstition, *conscious guilt*, curiosity, sympathy, melancholy, enthusiasm, all minister to it. Towns and cities therefore, as well as remote places, may become a theatre for the display of such popular feeling."

We had intended to lay before our readers the account which Mrs. T. gives of a Methodist Camp Meeting, at which she was present; but we forbear. There has not, as yet, so far as we are informed, been any attempt to introduce Camp Meetings into the North of Ireland; nor have periodical prayings been recommended for their success. Whenever either of these events takes place, we give due notice to all concerned, that we shall do unto the promoters of such measures, as we have done unto the Revivalists. R.

LAWS FOR THE OBSERVANCE OF THE "SABBATH."

THE tables of both houses of Parliament have lately been covered with petitions, praying for the enactment of laws to enforce the strict observance of the Lord's Day; or as the petitioners call it, the *Sabbath*.

Petitioners complain that the sanctity of this holy festival is, in numerous instances, violated by persons following their customary pursuits, and frequenting their usual places of amusement, when they might be, and ought to be engaged in public or private worship.

More especially they complain, that some pious persons who have refused to supply the public with those articles in which they trade, on the Lord's Day, have had their customers carried off from them, and their profits consequently diminished, by their less scrupulous neighbours. They therefore pray the legislature to enact additional and severe penalties against all such transgressors.

Now unquestionably the practice of which the petitioners complain, is bad. It is wrong, very wrong in any man, to neglect the means of advancing in religious and ethical knowledge, which the *rest* of the Lord's Day affords,—in order to follow those pursuits,—which he is at liberty to practise six days out of the seven, without censure, and without offence. It is wrong, very wrong, for the same reason, in any person to spend the whole of the Lord's Day in idle and unprofitable recreation. And it is a hardship, it may be, a severe hardship, for an industrious and religious family, to lose a part of that public patronage, on which they depend for comfort, and perhaps for subsistence; and to lose it merely for refusing to do what they feel conscientiously assured, is wrong. We admit this to be a hardship; and earnestly join with the petitioners in desiring an effectual remedy.

But the remedy which the petitioners invoke never will be effectual. The laws which now exist against the profanation of the Lord's Day, are severe enough; so severe that *they cannot be enforced*. Were other laws more rigorous enacted, they would either become a dead letter, or afford a productive harvest to those swarms of spies and informers whom bad laws are always sure to call into existence; and who subsist on the plunder of the community. Would not such a remedy be worse than the disease?

Those who seek to enforce the observance of any religious ordinance by civil penalties, know little of the spirit of Christianity. The Gospel rejects such aid. Christ's kingdom is not of this world. He never sanctions the employment of police officers and jailors and executioners as ministers of religion. He nowhere gives permission to his followers to pass Acts of Parlia-

ment against those who neglect the rites of his church. His laws address themselves to the mind. If they cannot secure the submission of the heart, they seek not to impose restraints on the outward frame. If our fellow Christians wish truly to prevent the profanation of the Lord's Day, *on Christian principles*, let them labour to effect their object in the only way which is sanctioned by Christ himself; namely, by spreading a knowledge of the truths and obligations of true religion among the community. Let them thus cut off the springs and sources of that corruption which they deplore. Acts of Parliament will never do this.

Those pious persons who have lost their customers by a strict observance of the duties proper for the Lord's Day, ought to submit with patience. They will be supported by a good conscience. They suffer in a good cause: they are suffering from adherence to what they are convinced is the will of God and their bounden duty. Thousands have done this before them, without thinking of protecting themselves against the recurrence or continuance of the evil by a legislative enactment. The apostles suffered in this manner: the early converts did so: the reformers did so: and all those who in different ages have been stigmatized as "heretics," tainted with "soul-destroying leprosies," have done so. Let not those to whom we address these remarks wonder, as if some new or strange thing had befallen them: they only share the common lot of all who will live godly lives. Let them not, by loud and reiterated lamentations, give the scoffers of the world a pretext for insinuating that, dearly as they love their religion, they love their gains and worldly profits still more dearly.

At all events, let not the penalties for violating the Lord's Day be confined to those who do so by engaging in trade and labour, to the exemption of still more notorious and flagrant offenders. Persons who have seen the splendid equipages in which many of the self-styled "godly" roll to public worship on Sunday mornings, and the sumptuous banquets which frequently await them in the evening on their return, will be at no loss to understand our meaning.

R.

Intelligence.

The Remonstrant Congregation of Ballymoney has lately received a handsome donation of tracts and a pulpit Bible, from Mr. John Caldwell, of New-York, accompanied by a very kind letter to one of the members.—The Bible, which is elegantly bound, has the following inscription stamped on the cover: “The gift of John Caldwell, of New-York, to the first congregation of Unitarian Christians, in his native town of Ballymoney—1852.” The tracts will form a valuable commencement of a tract society and library.

Amidst the bigotry and intolerance of religious persecution at home, it is most encouraging to this small and struggling congregation, to receive such a mark of sympathy from so great a distance; while the affectionate interest it manifests in the concerns of former friends and acquaintances, and the zeal it exhibits for the support and dissemination of Unitarian principles, say much for the heart and understanding of the donor.

Mr. Caldwell is a native of Ballymoney, and his family who resided for many years in the neighbourhood, were universally esteemed, and enjoyed a high character there for ability, integrity, and liberality of sentiment.

[It will be satisfactory to the readers of the Bible Christian to learn, that the attempts of Mr. Cromie, the landlord, to injure this congregation, have tended rather to the furtherance of the Gospel. Many liberal Christians of various denominations have stepped forward to aid the struggling society by pecuniary donations; and among them, to their immortal honour be it recorded, *several members of Calvinistic congregations*, who have taken this method of shewing that they do not participate in the narrow sectarianism avowed by Mr. Cromie; nor in the exclusive principle which prompted his refusal of certain stones—to him valueless—for the erection of a Remonstrant meeting-house. Such men are an honour to the churches to which they belong; and would be ornaments to any profession. Their conduct is regulated not by the spirit of *creed* but by the spirit of Christianity; and sufficiently proves that although in religious belief and doctrine they are at variance with their brethren, yet with all conscientious worshippers they are one in heart. The Unitarian body has also come forward with that liberality which was to have been expected. Under these circumstances the erection has proceeded most favourably, and little is now required to complete the building.

Go on, Mr. Cromie! Pursue in other cases the same course that you have pursued at Ballymoney and at Carrickfergus;—continue to make the intercourse of landlord and tenant the occasion of avowing your intolerance; and the address of a candidate to the electors assembled round the hustings, a pretext for venting your religious rancour! Go on! We promise you success in all your future attempts, equal to that which has attended your former efforts.—*But no more!* The world is growing older and somewhat wiser in these matters than it was formerly. The breeze has changed its direction; and you and those who are embarked with you, are feebly beating against the gale!]

DISCOURSES BY WM. ELLERY CHANNING.

London, 8vo. pp. 274.

ANOTHER volume from the pen of Dr. Channing! The announcement of such a publication is recommendation sufficient. The liberal and intelligent Christian will hasten to possess himself of so desirable an addition to his library. His satisfaction, if he be what such a person ought to be, will be increased on observing that the subjects of the discourses contained in this volume, are of a devotional and practical nature. Dr. Channing who has done so much to instruct and enlighten the world respecting the truths of religion, has done well to set forth a work enforcing attention to its practical principles and precepts. We can assure our readers that it is, in style and manner, worthy of the fame which its author has acquired in the controversial arena. It displays the same profoundness of penetration, the same vigour of conception, the same power of expression, which appear in the Remarks on Milton, and the Sermons on the Christian doctrine; accompanied with still more of that touching pathos which spreads such a charm over Dr. Channing's treatises, even on dogmatic theology. This volume will be found well adapted for the use of families as well as of individuals: and as such we beg to recommend it cordially to our readers.

The sermons comprised in the present volume are on the following subjects:—*Evidences of Christianity; Character of Christ; Christianity a rational Religion; Honor due to all men; Self-denial; The Imitableness of Christ's Character; The Evil of Sin; Immortality; and Love to Christ.*

We received this volume so short a time before the day of publication, that we cannot make room for any extracts; but in our next number we may perhaps justify the high opinion we have expressed, by some quotations.

R.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The Index to the third volume shall be sent to our Subscribers with the next number.

THE
Bible Christian.

No. III.

APRIL, 1833.

VOL. IV.

[FOR THE BIBLE CHRISTIAN.]

MOSES.

IN delineating the character of Moses, I shall confine myself to those endowments which qualified him to be the instrument of Providence in effecting a revolution unprecedented and unparalleled. He rescued a people consisting of 2,500,000 souls, from the dominion of the most powerful monarch then in the world. With these rude materials he moulded a nation in the deserts of Arabia, and established a system of civil and religious institutions, still in force and operation among themselves, and acknowledged and revered by all the enlightened nations of the world, whether Christian or Mahometan, at the present day. This people acted a distinguished part throughout ancient history, have survived the successive empires, kingdoms, and states of ancient times, and continue till this day abounding in wealth, and more numerous than in their most prosperous state.

The meanest Hebrew can boast of an ancestry, which sets at nought all our Norman and Saxon, Roman and Grecian pedigrees, if any such there be. This genealogy he does not derive from parchment rolls, or royal grants, but wears it imprinted on his front ; he does not require the assistance of antiquaries or heralds to decipher or emblazon his title, for it is legible to all. His blood is not contaminated with base or spurious mixtures, but flows in a clear unadulterated stream from the father of the faithful, and may be traced by an unquestionable lineage from Abraham up to the first created man. From that seed the world has derived all its spiritual blessings, privileges, and hopes ; and yet the very name of Jew is a term of derision and contempt.

Joseph had planted the Hebrews in the rich pastures of the province of Goshen, where they “increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceedingly

mighty ; and the land was filled with them." "Now there arose a new King over Egypt, who knew not Joseph. And he said unto his people, behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we."

The first expedient which he adopted to restrain this exuberant population, was to set "task-masters to afflict them with their burdens, but the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew ; wherefore they made them to serve with the greater rigour, and made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field. When the people murmured and complained, saying—"There is no straw given unto thy servants ; and they say to us, make brick ; Pharaoh said, ye are idle, ye are idle ; go and work, for there shall no straw be given you, yet ye shall deliver your tale of bricks."*

The next expedient for checking this increase so alarming to the political economists of that day, was, to stifle the children in the birth, and when this failed, to cast them into the river, but all these devices to oppose the course of nature were unavailing.

From this cruel sentence Moses was saved by the contrivance of his mother, and he became the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter.

Thus Moses was reared in the palace of Pharaoh, "and became learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians ;" but when he was come to years, he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter ; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season : and having maturely considered their grievances till his fortieth year, he then went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens, and he espied an Egyptian smiting a Hebrew, one of his brethren, "and he looked this way and that way,

* "The composition of bricks in Egypt was a mixture of clay, mud, and straw, slightly blended and kneaded together, and afterwards baked in the sun. Philo, in his life of Moses, says, that they used straw to bind their bricks. The straw, it appears, still preserves its original colour, and is a proof that those bricks were never burnt in stacks or in kilns."—*Vid. Dr. Shaw's Travels*, p. 136. These bricks were probably employed in those vast works for which Egypt has always been renowned.

and when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand. And when he went out the second day, behold, two men of the Hebrews strove together: "and he said unto him that did the wrong; wherefore smitest thou thy fellow? ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another?" And he said, "who made thee a prince and a judge over us? intendest thou to kill me as thou killedst the Egyptian?" And Moses feared, and said, surely this thing is known. But Moses supposed that they should have understood how that God by his hand would have delivered them, but they understood not.

These were strong indications, that the time for emancipating the Israelites was not yet come. They neither looked to him as their leader, nor were at peace among themselves; and his own life was in imminent danger, for "Pharaoh sought to slay him," for the death of his task-master. He withdrew therefore beyond the Red Sea, into the deserts of Arabia; and he sat down upon a well.

Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters, and they came and drew water, and filled the trough to water their father's flock. And the shepherds came and drove them away; but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock. The consequence of this act of courage and humanity was, that he was invited into the house, and was contented to stay with the man, who gave him his daughter.

In his new residence, he may have had frequent opportunities of communicating with his brethren in Egypt, by the caravans which frequently traversed the desert from the East, and his intelligence may have been so unfavourable, as to induce him to relinquish his original design. Whatever may have been the cause, he did not resume it till the expiration of forty years. He was then prompted by a divine admonition to return to Egypt. The personal magnanimity and miraculous circumstances by which his project was finally effected, are fully recorded by Moses himself. When this immense multitude reached the borders of Arabia, consisting of 600,000 fighting men, with their families, cattle, and other property, the exhibition must have astounded Moses himself, though acting under a divine commission.

As in ancient Rome it was customary for slaves to exercise the fine and ornamental arts, and even the learned professions, so it appears from the structure of the tabernacle and its ornaments, and the habiliments of the high priests, and other attendants, that a similar practice must have prevailed in Egypt. It is also manifest that a large portion of the emigrants must have been instructed in all the manufactures necessary for their accommodation in the wilderness; but the vastly greater portion were abject and ignorant slaves. The only favourable circumstances were, that they all retained their belief in Jehovah, and the principles of the Patriarchal religion. Though deeply tinged with a taste for the degrading superstitions of Egypt, they also retained a knowledge of their descents from the sons of Jacob respectively; and thus were naturally formed into twelve tribes or clans. On the whole, however, this heterogeneous multitude were altogether incapable of taking possession of the land of their fathers, which was the great object of their expedition. Moses who was to organise and govern this promiscuous mass, was totally deficient in one quality essential to such an undertaking, for he said unto the Lord, "O Lord! I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servants: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue." He lost no time, however, in introducing some degree of discipline into the host. For when, after some devious marches, he was encountered by the Amalekites, already alarmed at the inroad of such a multitude into the Arabian Peninsula, he was enabled to detach Joshua with a body of troops to repel their attack.

By the advice of Jethro his father-in-law, who joined him on the way, he also introduced a more general organization into the administration of justice. Their next stage was at mount Sinai, when the law was delivered, in the sublime and awful manner described in Exodus.

This was immediately followed by a remarkable instance of the brutal ignorance of the people, and their inveterate predilection for the idolatrous rites of Egypt, in the worship of the golden calf. Moses had the mortification of finding on his descent from the mountain, that in this they had been countenanced even by Aaron,

his brother and coadjutor; although the tribe of Levi, of which he was the chief, remained faithful, and executed vengeance on the offenders.

After their departure from Sinai, a further improvement was made in the constitution by the establishment of the great council of elders; the whole body also was reduced to military order, each tribe marching in succession under its own leaders, with its banner displayed, and took up its position in the appointed quarter of the camp. This took place in the eleventh month after their departure from Egypt. After various trials and vexations, Moses at length arrived near the borders of the Promised Land.

He now despatched a delegate from each tribe to ascertain the nature of the country, and its produce.—On their return they reported, that, the land indeed was highly cultivated and abounded with the richest produce; but was inhabited by a gigantic race, occupying cities “walled up to heaven.” On this report a general panic spread through the host, followed by a formidable mutiny. It now appeared, that a multitude of refractory slaves lately escaped from bondage was ill calculated for the conquest or occupation of such a country. A decisive resolution was therefore adopted, that the enterprise should be suspended while any who had attained to maturity prior to their exit from Egypt, remained alive, and that in the mean time they should sojourn in the desert like other Arabian tribes.

Another more formidable rebellion speedily followed, which evinced the wisdom or necessity of this determination.

When the appointed period arrived, Moses found himself at the head of a race of men reared and educated by himself, habituated to hardship and obedience, skilled in military discipline, and panting for the long expected opportunity of invading the land promised to their fathers. Accordingly, after a series of victories they obtained possession of all the countries to the east of Jordan, and were now ready for passing into the land flowing with milk and honey. Moses, however, had been forewarned, that he should never enter upon a country to which he had looked as the supreme object of his ambition, and the reward of all his toils. He accordingly summoned the

assembly of all Israel, and after a brief account of their adventures, and a summary of the law, and those eloquent and powerful exhortations to obedience, recorded in the book of Deuteronomy, he ascended a mountain, whence he had a view of the city of Jerico, the plane of Jordan, and part of the land of Canaan; and having enjoyed this prospect, he surrendered his spirit into the hands of him who gave it.

As the reader is familiarly acquainted with the History of Moses, I have selected only such particulars as throw the strongest light upon his character, and I decline making a diffusive panegyric on his merits as disproportioned to my limits. I shall only mention a singular instance of his moderation and magnanimity: he assumed no dignity or office for himself nor his descendants; but left his sons private persons of the tribe of Levi; though he appointed Aaron and his posterity high-priests in perpetual succession. His system of civil and ecclesiastical law, however, is too important to be passed over in silence. It may appear to some that this is sufficiently developed in the sacred writings, since his principles of civil government must present themselves in practice throughout the whole of the Jewish history, and the Levitical Law occupies the greater part of the Pentateuch. Notwithstanding this, however, no subject has more severely exercised the industry and ingenuity of the most learned Hebræans.

On this subject, it may be observed, that as to particular laws we are sufficiently informed, but in no part has he explained the nature of the constitution, or the respective powers of the different estates. Whether this was necessary in that age, he himself was the best judge. His omission, however, has laid us under the necessity of collecting these important pieces of information from unconnected, and often obscure, passages in the Jewish History; often from events which happened after the constitution had lost its original purity and vigour.

The simplest plan of the civil government, and probably nearest the truth, is the following:—The Ark was the centre of the state; the Oracle from the Mercy Seat was the sovereign power, though seldom exerted; the High Priest was its organ. The government was a

Federal Patriarchal Republic. Each Tribe was a separate state, descended from one of the sons of Jacob. The Prince of the tribe was the eldest lineal descendant, or heir male of its patriarch. The Heads of the tribe, were the lineal descendants of the sons of the patriarch, and every head of a family ruled his own house.

Some suppose, that the 70 Elders appointed by Moses were the foundation of the Sanhedrim, others think that the chief council was composed of the Princes and Heads of the tribes. To this council, however formed, there was an appeal from the inferior courts and magistrates. see Deut. xvii. 8. There is also mention made of the congregation of all Israel, but its nature is not defined. These assemblies were convened only on special occasions, for they had no occasion to levy taxes, the whole pecuniary burden of the people lying in Tythes and offerings; nor were there any new laws to be made, or old ones to be repealed; as it was one of the peculiarities of this constitution, that there was no legislative authority except Jehovah, who promulgated no laws after the time of Moses, and that their laws were unalterable: for it is expressly and repeatedly said in the divine code,—“Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall you diminish aught from it.”

The difficulty of tracing the progress of the Mosaical constitution, and the regular exercise of the Jewish government, will readily appear, on recollecting the chief periods in the history of that people. Joshua was wholly occupied with the conquest of the Canaanitish tribes, and the distribution of the land. The tumultuary state of affairs under the Judges, admits of the mention of few incidents in municipal government, or domestic life. The appointment of a king made a great change in every department of the state, and during the separation of the two kingdoms, and the horrors of those dreadful times, the historian has little leisure for noting any affairs of inferior interest. In any of these periods, there is little mention made even of their principal religious institutions; which might induce some to suspect that they had fallen into disuse, but under Hezekiah, Josiah, and Ezra, and as late as the time of the Maccabees, they appear to be in full exercise, and not less so in the time of our Lord. It is not the office of an his-

torian, to note the recurrence of such observances as are familiar to the reader. An English Historian would deem it frivolous to record the regular observance of the Lord's day, or the periodical return of Christmas and Easter.

Their Agrarian Law also deserves to be mentioned as an original part of their constitution, for it was an agricultural republic. When the Israelitish army had penetrated into the heart of the promised land, they began to share the country among them; they divided it into twelve portions, according to the numbers of the Tribes (for Levi was otherwise provided for;) and their place was supplied by assigning two lots to the descendants of Joseph; five of these portions were arbitrarily assigned to five particular tribes, and for the residue, the seven remaining tribes cast lots. After a province had been allotted to each tribe, it was divided into a number of districts equal to the number of families in the tribe, and assigned to these families by lot: these districts were again subdivided according to the households comprehended in the family, and lastly, these subdivisions were distributed among the individuals that composed the household, in farms containing something more than twenty acres each. So that each tribe inhabited a particular province; each family lived together on the same district; each household resided together on the same subdivision of this district, and every individual was possessed of a freehold of twenty acres.

After the landed property was thus distributed, it was absolutely unalienable; and there were two regulations to make it so: for first, lest it should be transferred by the marriage of heiresses, they were enjoined to marry in their own tribe; a severe, but necessary law, yet not so severe, as it at first appears; for as the women always lived among their own relations, and had little or no communication with the neighbouring tribes, they would seldom place their affections on any object forbidden by the law.

The other regulation is, the institution of the year of jubilee; which occurred every fiftieth year, and at which time, all landed property, whether mortgaged or otherwise transferred, reverted to its original owner.

One circumstance more remains to be taken notice of, and that is, all these lands were holden by Military

Tenure. Every Israelite was obliged to attend the standard of his tribe, whenever he was called upon for the public service.

The Levitical Law was almost wholly ceremonial. The following may be some of the reasons for adopting this mode of worship. First, the depravity of their understandings, consequent upon a long and severe bondage, which rendered them incapable of relishing a more spiritual dispensation. Second, the insinuating nature of a Ceremonial Worship, which rendered it better adapted to that people, especially as they were reconciled to it by a residence for several generations in Egypt, a country so remarkable for giving birth to the superstitions of the ancient world. Third, the danger of their inventing a ritual for themselves, or conforming to the idolatries of the Canaanitish tribes, or other nations by which they were to be surrounded. One great end to be attained, both by the civil and ecclesiastical polity of the Hebrews, was a total separation from the Idolatrous World; for this purpose, they were prohibited by their civil constitution, from having communication with any other people; with this design a ritual was instituted, which taught them to consider the religious ceremonies, the civil customs, and even the food of other nations, as unclean. The temptations to idolatry were so numerous, and the modes of it so various, being minutely intermixed with all the usages of domestic life, as to account for the extreme particularity of the Levitical directions. This will also justify the appointment and prohibition of particular meats, which would effectually prevent any familiar intercourse between them and their neighbours, and preserve them from being seduced by mirth and festivity to partake of meat offered to idols. In fact, the general tendency of the Levitical ordinances, is to preserve purity of body and mind, and the prominent features in the whole code, are all moral. The principal of these is the Sabbath. Thus, too, the Ten Commandments enjoin no ritual observances, but only the practice of duties, social, personal, and sacred. Of the same kind are the blessings and curses which Moses commanded to be pronounced on Mount Ebal, and Gerizim.

There are three great Festivals in the Hebrew ritual, which are the most remarkable ordinances in the Mosical Law, and fair samples of the rest,—the Passover, Pentecost, and the feast of Tabernacles, commemorative of the protection of Providence, and celebrated with acts of gratitude and devotion. The Passover, was a memorial of their deliverance from Egypt; Pentecost of the giving of the Law; and the Feast of Tabernacles, of their wanderings in the Wilderness.

The administration of both the civil and ecclesiastical law, was entrusted to the tribe of Levi, and as it was necessary that the Levites should be present in every part of the country, they surrendered *their* share of the territory, for forty-eight towns and a tythe of the produce of the land, every third year, which was not an equivalent for what they resigned, and a far less certain and independent support.* Their religious services were confined to the Tabernacle or Temple, which were the only places appointed or allowed for public worship; the establishment of any other was an act of schism or rebellion.

ERASMUS.

EXTRACT FROM LOCKE'S REASONABLENESS OF CHRISTIANITY.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE BIBLE CHRISTIAN.]

SIR,—I send you the following extract from the celebrated Mr. Locke's Treatise on the Reasonableness of Christianity, as delivered in Scriptures. Your readers will, I am sure, duly estimate the importance of the sentiments contained, and feel satisfaction from reading the opinions entertained by one of the master spirits of English literature, on a subject which he had so deeply studied. Similar views are given in his invaluable preface to his work on the Epistles, from which it would be worth while to give occasional extracts.—Yours, W.

“THERE remains yet something to be said to those who will be ready to object, if the belief of Jesus of *Nazareth* to be the *Messiah*, together with those concomitant articles of his resurrection, rule, and coming again to judge the world be all the faith required as necessary to justification, to what purpose were the epistles written.”

“To this I answer, that the epistles were written upon several occasions; and he that will read them as he

* For the maintenance of Priests and Levites, see Deut. xviii.

ought, must observe what it is in them that is principally aimed at ; find what is the argument in hand, and how managed, if he will understand them right, and profit by them. The observing of this will best help us to the true meaning and mind of the writer ; for that is the truth which is to be received and believed ; and not scattered sentences in scripture language, accommodated to our notions and prejudices. We must look into the drift of the discourse, observe the coherence and connexion of the parts, and see how it is consistent with itself and other parts of Scripture ; if we will conceive it right. We must not cull out, as best suits our system, here and there a period or a verse, as if they were all distinct and independent aphorisms, and make these the fundamental articles of the Christian faith, and necessary to salvation, unless God has made them so. There may be many truths in the Bible, which a good Christian may be wholly ignorant of, and so not believe ; which, perhaps, some lay great stress on, and call fundamental articles, because they are the distinguishing points of their communion. The Epistles, most of them, carry on a thread of argument, which in the style they are writ, cannot every where be observed without great attention. And to consider the texts, as they stand and bear a part in that, is to view them in their due light, and the way to get the true sense of them. They were writ to those who were in the faith, and true Christians already ; and so could not be designed to teach them the fundamental articles and points necessary to salvation. The Epistle to the Romans was writ to all that were at Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints, whose faith was spoken of through the world, Chap. i. 7, 8. To whom St. Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians was, he shews, Chap. i. 2, 4, &c. Unto the Church of God, which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints ; with all them that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours. I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ ; that in every thing ye are enriched by him in all utterance, and in all knowledge ; even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you. So that ye come behind in no gift ; waiting for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. And so like-

wise the second was, to the Church of God at Corinth, with all the saints in Achaia, chap. i. 1. His next is to the churches of Galatia. That to the Ephesians was, to the saints that were at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus. So likewise, to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ at Colosse, who had faith in Christ Jesus, and love to the saints. To the Church of the Thessalonians. To Timothy his son in the faith. To Titus his own son after the common faith. To Philemon, his dearly beloved and fellow labourer. And the author to the Hebrews calls those he writes to, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, chap. iii. 1. From whence it is evident, that all those whom St. Paul wrote to, were brethren saints, faithful in the Church, and so Christians already; and therefore wanted not the fundamental articles of the Christian religion, without a belief of which they could not be saved: nor can it be supposed, that the sending of such fundamentals, was the reason of the apostle's writing to any of them. To such also St. Peter writes, as is plain from the first chapter of each of his Epistles. Nor is it hard to observe the like in St. James and St. John's Epistles. And St. Jude directs his thus: To them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called. The Epistles therefore being all written to those who were already believers and Christians, the occasion and end of writing them, could not be to instruct them in that which was necessary to make them Christians. This it is plain they knew and believed already; or else they could not have been Christians and believers. And they were writ upon particular occasions; and without those occasions had not been writ; and so cannot be thought necessary to salvation; though they resolving doubts and reforming mistakes, are of great advantage to our knowledge and practice. I do not deny, but the great doctrines of the Christian faith are dropped here and there, and scattered up and down in most of them. But it is not in the Epistles we are to learn what are the fundamental articles of faith, where they are promiscuously, and without distinction mixed with other truths in discourses that were (though for edification indeed,) yet only occasional. We shall find and discern those great and necessary points best in the preaching of our Saviour

and the apostles, to those who were yet strangers, and ignorant of the faith, to bring them in, and convert them to it. And what that was, we have seen already out of the history of the Evangelists and the Acts, where they are plainly laid down, so that nobody can mistake them. The Epistles to particular churches, besides the main argument of each of them, (which was some present concernment of that particular church to which they severally were addressed) do in many places explain the fundamentals of the Christian religion; and that wisely; by proper accommodations to the apprehensions of those they were writ to, the better to make them imbibe the Christian doctrine, and the more easily to comprehend the method, reasons, and grounds of the great work of salvation. Thus we see in the Epistle to the Romans, adoption, (a custom well known amongst those of Rome) is much made use of, to explain to them the grace and favour of God, in giving them eternal life; to help them to conceive how they became the children of God, and to assure them of a share in the kingdom of heaven, as heirs to an inheritance. Whereas the setting out, and confirming the Christian faith to the Hebrews, in the epistle to them, is by allusions and arguments, from the ceremonies, sacrifices, and economy of the Jews, and reference to the records of the Old Testament. And as for the general Epistles, they, we may see, regard the state and exigencies, and some peculiarities of those times. The holy writers, inspired from above, wrote nothing but truth; and in most places very weighty truths to us now, for the expounding, clearing, and confirming of the Christian doctrine, and establishing those in it who had embraced it. But yet every sentence of theirs must not be taken up, and looked on as a fundamental article necessary to salvation, without an explicit belief whereof, nobody could be a member of Christ's church here, nor be admitted into his eternal kingdom hereafter. If all, or most of the truths, declared in the Epistles, were to be received as fundamental articles, what then became of those Christians who were fallen asleep? (as St. Paul witnesses in his first to the Corinthians, many were) before these things in the Epistles were revealed to them? Most of the Epistles not being written till above twenty years after our Saviour's ascension, and some after thirty."

ON THE SERVICE OF GOD.

IT is too much the inclination of men to narrow the pale of the Universal Church, and to contract the limits of the service and favour of the Universal Father. Some confine the service of God to the active virtues of benevolence and justice; and others to the exercise of the personal virtues, temperance and self-denial. Some delight more in the devotional and sympathetic feelings, and in abstraction from all temporal concerns. To these sentimental and contemplative habits, there are many that prefer a dogmatical system of implicit faith. Of these, different sects maintain different creeds, and restrict our duty to God and his love for us, each of them to its respective system of belief. It is evident, however, that the plans of Providence, though all consistent and tending to one end, are nevertheless various: and that to promote these designs, God has made men of various capacities and dispositions. As the service of God is various, so are the qualifications of his servants. Hence we may conclude, that it is the duty of all men to serve God; and that we should serve him in different ways according to our respective abilities. There is one service, which we are all qualified and should be all disposed to render, and which is therefore expected from all mankind. Honour and obedience, reverence and worship, and a due attention to this duty, will sanctify every other service, direct it to its proper object, and concentrate all our thoughts and actions in duty to God. All men should by prayer, meditation, and attendance on religious duties, keep their minds in a pious frame, so as to act from pure motives, and particularly from a desire to please God, and promote the great ends of his moral government. This is an universal duty, because all men are capable of it, and because it regulates and dignifies every action of our lives. Actions, which are not prompted by any virtuous motive cannot pretend to the reputation of virtue; and virtuous actions, performed without any reference to the will of God, can have no pretensions to be styled acts of duty to him. These are the actions, which some bigoted people will have to be sinful; but they are not sinful. If they proceed from pure, disinterested or benevolent motives,

they are meritorious; but not in an equal degree with those which combine with these motives a regard to the will of God. As an action cannot be virtuous, except it proceed from a virtuous intention, so an action cannot be religious, except it proceed from a religious motive, and the most meritorious action is that which is both moral and religious. One advantage of this reference of all our conduct to the divine will is, that, while we serve God in one way, we shall not thwart him in another: we shall not, by inattention, frustrate the designs of Providence (as far as this is left in the power of mortal men) in one way, while we are promoting them in another: nor through a false system of morals, serve God and offend him in the same action, by attempting to promote his glory by unlawful means. A regard to the will of heaven will, on the contrary, make our whole lives uniform, embellish our morality with piety, animate our duty with devotion, correct the errors of reason, and add to our virtue faith.

While we observe these rules, we may be satisfied, that we are serving God; and need not be uneasy, because our line of life is of an active, and not of a contemplative cast. The generality of men seem to be indifferent, whether their occupations be agreeable to the will of God or not; but there are many, who, at least in the beginning of their lives, are rendered unhappy from an apprehension, that the employments in which they are under a necessity, or at least some strong temptation to engage, are contrary to the principles of pure morality and revealed religion. This is a most laudable sentiment in young people, and should neither be hastily relinquished by themselves, nor harshly suppressed by their friends. There are some inhuman kinds of traffic, and certain occupations so exposed to temptations of different kinds, that they should by all means be avoided by persons of sensibility; and if they must be carried on, let it be by men who are insensible to moral degradation, and who, we may charitably hope, will not be so deeply chargeable with guilt as those would be who should undertake such employments in opposition to their feelings, their reason and their conscience. Men should avoid involving themselves in any business that may eventually prove inconsistent with the service of

God; and should prefer for themselves and their children, those lines of life, which are most conducive to the progress of religion and the happiness of mankind. A man should esteem himself happy, whose daily avocations tend to the improvement of his own mind, the dissemination of religious knowledge, or the welfare of society. If his lot be cast in a different department of human life, he should consider himself as having a more arduous duty to perform, but he can have no cause for uneasiness, while he prosecutes his peculiar line of life with fair and honourable intentions, and studies to make it as subservient as possible to the best interests of mankind, temporal and spiritual.

It is our duty to exert ourselves to the utmost in that department, which we have chosen; and it may be reasonably expected, that we shall not omit any opportunity of serving God in any other way, that may present itself; but it cannot be the design of our Creator, that we should all serve him in the same way, by addicting ourselves to the same course of life; because in this case only one department of life would be occupied, and those who should fill it would have no objects upon whom to exercise their talents, their knowledge, or their virtues; and because there is no employment for which all men are qualified by nature; and by aiming at what they were not qualified for, they would neglect their proper spheres. Some men have a natural turn for devotion, others for charity; some for public business, others for private friendship and domestic society: some for action, others for study and contemplation. The devotee keeps alive a spirit of religion in men of the world. The charitable man relieves the distresses which arise from the natural condition of man, or are occasioned by the contentions of men in active life. The studious man instructs the man of business; but without the man of business, a world of devotees, charitable persons and students, is an absurdity that can hardly be conceived.

There are various ways, then, in which we may serve God; and we must be careful actually to serve him in these various ways; and serve him "with all our heart and soul." Thus while we are labouring for the support and education of our families, we are promoting

the designs of Providence, and may be said to be subservient to the will of God; but if we serve him with all our heart and soul, and mind and strength, we shall regulate our families and educate our children with a view to please and serve him. Thus in carrying on our several professions or branches of business, we may be said to serve God, but except his service be a motive to our exertions, and a regulator of our conduct, we are but unconscious agents in a great plan, in which we take no concern. It is plain, then, that in general we are serving God, often without our knowledge, sometimes against our will: but to render this service acceptable in his sight, it must be performed with a view to his service, his favour and his glory, as we express it according to human ideas, that is, with a view to forward those great objects, which we conceive he had in view in the creation and redemption of mankind, as the glory of a prince or statesman consists in the success of his plans.

It is observable, that notwithstanding the variety of practical instruction, with which scripture abounds: notwithstanding the perfect purity of our Saviour's abstract principles: notwithstanding the vast variety of cases in common life, to which he has occasion to apply those principles; and his severe reprehension of the peculiar vices of several classes of men, there is not one employment or station in civil society, that is reprobated by the sacred writers. The taxgatherers and the soldiers are instructed in their respective duties: the money-changers and the lawyers are reproved for their several vices, but none of these professions or occupations is condemned. God might be served in them all. Our Saviour denounces woes against the Scribes and Pharisees, not on account of the nature of their office, or the errors of their faith; but because they are hypocrites and uncharitable; because from selfish views they would neither embrace his religion themselves, nor suffer others to embrace it; because by an affectation of sanctity they devoured widows' houses; because they made proselytes, not to make men better but worse, and even worse than themselves; because they taught men equivocations, by which they might falsify in swearing: because they affected a sanctimonious strictness in trifles,

and omitted the weightier matters of the law, justice, mercy and faith ; and because they made a display of external purity, while within they were full of extortion and excess, hypocrisy and iniquity.

We may not conclude from this, that there is no kind of employment in modern society, that ought to be abandoned ; but we may be pretty confident that of those, which are essential or highly conducive to the welfare and good order of society, there are none, in which we may not serve God ; and of this there can be no doubt, that if we exercise these various offices with a constant view of serving God, and making them subservient to religion, we shall fill them, so as to promote at the same time the good of society in the most effectual manner.

A man may, therefore, spend a godly and useful life in those offices, which are reckoned among the meanest and most exceptionable : and on the other hand, he may occupy the most important and honourable situations ; and even discharge the duties of them without reproach, and yet deserve no credit for serving God ; for if we pursue any kind of business whatsoever without any regard to the will of God, or the happiness of his creatures, merely with a view to personal gratification, to luxury, vanity, ambition, or even to an honourable subsistence, or from an instinctive propensity to action, or taste for any particular pursuit, we can hardly pretend that we are serving God, though we may eventually promote the designs of Providence. The affairs of the world are so ordered by infinite wisdom, that a man can hardly be active in any way, except he be doing mischief, without contributing to the welfare of mankind in one respect or another : but in the case we are speaking of, this benefit may be ascribed wholly to the goodness of God, and not at all to the reluctant or ignorant agents. They only operate like the wheels in a machine, or at best like the beasts of the field. The sun, moon and stars equally fulfil his will.

The meanest member of society needs not, therefore, to be discouraged at his lowly condition, for he may serve God as heartily, though not always so effectually, as his most exalted fellow-citizen ; and persons in his sphere are as necessary to the plan of Providence as

those in the most distinguished rank. In a well furnished mansion there must be vessels to honour, and vessels to dishonour ; in a complicated machine the small movements are as necessary as the great ; in the frame of society, the great movements could not operate at all without the minuter wheels. As this tends to render the poor contented, so it should contribute to humble the rich, and make the great sober-minded.

The world may be compared to an extensive and complicated manufacture, in which the meanest assistant is essential to produce a grand and beautiful effect : in which the most ingenious artist knows nothing but his own province, and is ignorant of the great work, in which he acts such a considerable part ; and in which one, who should pretend to comprehend the design of the master, and step out of his own place to promote it, would only produce confusion. Thus are we instruments in the hand of providence, all of us contributing to a plan, of which we have no conception ; each of us assigned a particular department ; and each of us liable to thwart the plan of the grand director, when we depart from our own province and presume to judge of the progress or final result of his designs.

This comparison suggests another reflexion, that as a workman would deserve no praise or reward, who spoiled one part of an elegant design, while he was executing another : so we are expected to be uniform in our service of God. We are not required to serve him out of our proper sphere : it is only expected, that we shall not violate the laws of God in one part of our conduct, while we observe them in another. A man who serves God in his professional or mercantile character, is not therefore to be excused for infringing the moral precepts of the Gospel ; nor is a man to make a correct domestic character a pretext for oppression or fraud in his department as a magistrate or a merchant. Piety is not to be a cloak for calumny : nor generosity for dishonesty : nor a display of patriotism for domestic oppression ; nor a mild and amiable conduct at home for corruption in public life. " This would not be to serve the Lord our God with *all* our heart and soul ; " any more than to love our neighbour as ourselves." With regard to God, it would indicate a division of ser-

vice, an inconsistency of views: with respect to our neighbour it would betray a want of pure affection, and a want of simplicity in our character.

This idea, that we are co-operating with God in forwarding the good order and improvement of the world, is certainly one of the most satisfactory and honorable, that we can entertain of our own employments, whatever they may be. It should render us contented with the humblest department in his service; and it adds dignity to the most exalted station in human life. This consideration must give us peculiar pleasure, when we can clearly discern the tendency and efficacy of our occupations in furthering the designs of Providence in any degree; and when we are destined, like the subordinate labourers in a complicated work, to a kind of drudgery, which to a worldly mind would appear degrading and even useless, it must confer some degree of elevation, or at least consolation, that we are, even in the meanest station, and the most trifling degree, workers together with God; and that our labours not only do, in some respect, promote his designs, but are absolutely necessary to the completion of his great work. It is no small additional encouragement, to be assured, that "our labour in the work of the Lord shall not be in vain:" but on the contrary, that we shall be rewarded, not according to the importance of the office assigned us, but to the diligence and good will, which we have displayed in the execution of it. Every servant who had doubled his talents, whether he had received fewer or more, met the same salutation from his master, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant. Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Whether, then, we are placing the finishing ornament on the top of some conspicuous part of the edifice, or are working among the rubbish of the foundation, we are coadjutors with God.

Whether from some elevated situation we contemplate the grandeur and symmetry of the whole plan, or are assigned a post, from which every thing appears to be involved in confusion and trouble, we may be equally assured, that the plan is wise, and its completion sure.

Whether every part around us seems to be rising to perfection, or the department in which we are labouring appears to be falling into decay, and relapsing into ruin, we may rely upon it, that in the end all will be well; and though we should reasonably despair, that we shall ever see the work completed, or even this dilapidation repaired, we may be assured, that other workmen will arise, who at the appointed time shall behold the happy conclusion of the work; and whatever we may think of the daily wages assigned us, or of the accommodations provided for us, we may console ourselves, that in the end, when worn out in the service, we shall, if we faint not, receive an ample reward.

On the whole we should rejoice and glory, that we are employed in the service of God; we should study to make all our actions contribute to the furtherance of his plans, as far as they are made known to us; and we should console ourselves that our patience in well-doing will in no wise lose its reward. NEMO.

DR. COOKE AND THE UNITARIAN TRACTS.

THE Belfast "Unitarian Society for the Diffusion of Christian Knowledge" are bound to pass a vote of thanks to Dr. Cooke, for a late attack made by him from a pulpit in Holywood, on some of their publications. He is, it will scarcely be disputed, very skilful in appealing to the prejudices of his hearers; and seldom fails to scare and frighten some of them into a slavish submission to his dictates. But his recent exhibitions at Holywood have answered a better purpose than he intended, and have been worth three or four advertisements, in giving publicity to measures and Tracts, of which the majority there had never heard before. A number of his then audience had more curiosity than he imagined, and are of opinion that they should "prove all things, and hold fast that which is good." They know he would urge Jews, Mahometans, Romanists, and Arminians, to turn from the error of their ways, and embrace his overtures; and, being doubtful of his infallibility, they are beginning to think that "every man should be fully persuaded in his own mind."

Though the Dr. is neither slow in disseminating Tracts, nor in raising ways and means to hire "Bible Readers" (or rather Bible misinterpreters,) and missionaries, he is greatly shocked at the liberty which his neighbouring Unitarians have taken in publishing a few pages in vindication of their sentiments. His wrath is kindled higher than it otherwise would have been, by the "gratis" circulation which is given to their publications, and by the posing way in which they ask some "questions." He certainly did not recommend exclusive dealing to his friends, but he thought the less conversation they held with Unitarians, the safer and better it would be for them. Perhaps he will grant a little *indulgence* in the summer months, and permit them to accept of the money of the Belfast Unitarians, as rent for houses and lodgings. Though he sneered and railed at the Unitarian Tracts as silly and ridiculous, he nevertheless denounced the reading of them:—forgetting that, if they be so poor, the more they are disseminated among his friends, so much the worse for his opponents.

In condescending to notice particulars, the Dr. referred to "*Questions to Believers in the Trinity*," and laboured to free Trinitarians from the charge of maintaining that *God died*. As Trinitarians advocate the "*supreme Deity of Christ*," it is no doubt a troublesome question to ask them,—“If the real and very Christ *himself*, and in his *proper person* died, was it *God himself* that died, was laid in a sepulchre, and on the third day was restored to life?” To be sure Dr. Cooke and his disciples, after a number of ejaculations may say,—“we answer,—‘And the word was made flesh.’” This is begging the question by an appeal to words, which are moulded into every meaning which bigotry pleases to put upon them. But Unitarians ask,—“And was God, who is a *spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable*, ever made *flesh*”!!! For if the Word and God be convertible terms, (i. e. if the Word be God, and God the Word,) then whatever is true of the one must be true of the other. The apostle Paul says to the Corinthians,—“We preach *Christ crucified*, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness.” Will any Trinitarian say, *we preach God crucified*? The author of the book of Acts says,—“Let all the house of Israel know assuredly,

that God hath made that *same Jesus* whom ye crucified both *Lord and Christ*." Will any Trinitarian venture to say, that God hath made that same Jesus who was crucified the *supreme God*? or that he hath made the *human nature* of the same Jesus who was crucified, both *Lord and Christ*? Let him take his choice of these difficulties. The Apostle in discoursing upon the Lord's supper, quotes the words of Christ, whom he represents as having taught him for the information of the Corinthian Church—"for as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." Will any Calvinists dare to say,—for as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew *God's death* till he come?

But they reply,—*Christ has two natures in one person; the nature of God and the nature of man.*" I answer, the scriptures are altogether silent respecting the supposed two natures of Christ; nor is it possible to form the faintest idea of one infinite and spiritual and omnipotent God, with three persons in the Godhead, and two natures in each of the persons, whether each person be considered as *finite* or *infinite*. Nor is it possible to picture in the mind the possibility of equality between two persons, the one with *one* nature, and the other with *two*. But the doctrine of two natures in one person carries absurdity upon the very face of it; for if Jesus "be perfect God and perfect man, in one Christ,;" the union that subsists between them cannot be the union of *two natures* in one person; but the union of *two distinct and proper persons*. For a *perfect God* is surely a divine person, and a *perfect man* is surely a human person. And if the *divine person* be sometimes spoken of as Christ, and the *human person* sometimes spoken of as Christ, then there must be *two Christs*. If Dr. Cooke however and his Calvinistic brethren, will honestly adhere to the doctrine of *two natures in one person*, they will please inform me what is meant, when Christ uses *personal pronouns* in speaking of himself. When he says,—“I can of mine own self do nothing,”—in what sense does he use the *personal pronoun I*? If he does not use it for his *person*, for what does he use it? And as he is but *one* person, if it do not represent that person, in what sense is it employed? When the

apostle John, speaking of Jesus Christ, the righteous, says,—“and *he* is the propitiation (or mercy seat) for our sins,”—for whom or for what does the apostle use the *personal* pronoun *he*? I ask these questions for information, and if it be refused me, what am I to suppose? I am no great philologist, but when I see or hear the personal pronouns *I*, *he*, *his*, *him*, and *me* used, I cannot help thinking that a whole *person* is spoken of,—that is a distinct intelligent agent,—whether that person may be considered as possessing two natures or ten.

As the Dr. denied that Trinitarians believed in the *death of God*, it is not easy to conceive what he means in speaking of the death of Christ, whom I have several times heard him call the *supreme* God. The truth is, that he plunged and floundered, and explained and re-explained, until “in wandering mazes lost,” he lost himself and perplexed his hearers. He forgot, I am convinced, counting upon the credulity and prejudices of his Holywood flock, that some of them had read the Calvinistic Hymns of Deacon, Toplady, and Watts. How many or how few congregations now use these Hymns in public worship, I cannot say; but while it is freely admitted that they contain many beautiful passages, I will quote a few of their more theological stanzas; hoping that neither Jews nor Gentiles, Pagans nor Mahometans will ever judge of Christianity by the sentiments which they express.

“ My King, my Saviour, and *my God*,
The fulness of thy grace I view;
Wash my offences in *thy blood*,
And make my soul sincere and true.
Yet, (O how marvellous the sight!)
I see *thee* on a cross *expire*;
Thy *Godhead* veiled in *sable* night,
And angels from the scene retire.”

DEACON.

“ Endless scenes of wonder rise,
With that mysterious tree,
Crucified before our eyes,
Where we our *MAKER* see.

Lo, the sunbeams veil their light,
With their *MAKER sympathize*,
Leave the world in sudden night!
The *God* of angels *dies*.”

TOPLADY.

“ Here at thy cross, my *dying God*,
 I lay my soul beneath thy love,
 Beneath the droppings of *thy blood*,
 Jesus, nor shall it e’er remove.

Well might the sun in darkness hide,
 And shut his glories in,
 When God the mighty maker *died*,
 For man the creature’s sin.”

WATTS.

Here is a specimen of Calvinistic theology, as contained in three different Hymn Books, and I could quote many verses equally frightful. If Paine or Voltaire had written these lines now cited, all Christendom would have pronounced them not merely deists but atheists. And no wonder ; for, so far as I have read, there is nothing in all heathenism more wild and blasphemous than the ideas conveyed by several of the expressions. Let Dr. Cooke and his associates take good heed, that they “ put not a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall in their brethren’s way,” by the use of similar phrases and modes of speech, which must unavoidably *confuse* the minds of more reflecting Christians, and excite the prejudices of the more enquiring Jews and Hindoos. No wonder that Dr. Watts went down to his grave, in lamentation and mourning, at the thought of having published, under the charms of poetry, such black and startling sentiments. But he had sold the copy-right, and the work was too *profitable*, from its popular doctrines, to be purified and reduced to a reasonable and christian Hymn Book.

The “ *Questions to believers in the Trinity*” I have many times read, and while I would recommend them to all denominations of Christians, I would also recommend that they should have a copy of the “ answers from the Holy Scriptures, to questions proposed to Trinitarians.” The *first question* in the former tract, is very easy to a candid mind, which is in pursuit of nothing but truth. It is, “ Are God and Christ two beings, or one being?” The answer given in the latter tract is both confused and evasive. “ The Christ,” says the *answer*, “ is an appellation given to our Lord as *God-man* ; the question, therefore, is not correctly put.” I am rather inclined to think that the question is easy,

and that every Christian who studies soundness more than subtlety of mind, is bound to answer it for his own satisfaction. The truth is, that every one who studies the question, must have an opinion, whether he believes God and Christ to be *two* beings, or *one* being. The assumption that "*the Christ*" is an appellation given to our Lord as *God-man*, is a bold and groundless assertion, for which we have no authority, in the Holy Scriptures; the convenient term "*God-man*" being altogether of *human contrivance*. But if "*Jehovah the Father, and Jehovah the Son are ONE BEING,*" as the answer asserts, how are they at the same time *two distinct persons*? If Christ and his Father "*are ONE,*" so it is also said, and the same original term is used in both places, that the disciples are ONE, even as Christ and his Father are ONE. But it is not said, as Calvinists would fondly have it, that Christ and his Father are *one God*, nor is it said, nor even supposed, that the disciples were *one man*. The quotation from John, 14 and 11th, and used in the answer, "*Believe me that I am IN the Father and the Father IN ME,*" proves too much for Dr. Cooke and his confederates, for the 20th verse of the *very same chapter* represents Christ as having said to his primitive followers, "*At that day ye shall know, that I am IN my Father, and you IN me, and I IN you.*" Did any one ever suppose, that because the *disciples* were IN CHRIST, and HE IN THEM, that the disciples were therefore Christ? No. Why, then, put such a very different meaning upon the *very same words*, when used between Christ and his Father? Let Christians be honest and consistent, and there is little fear of the rapid prevalence and the powerful influence of Gospel truth.

It is not in the power of any Christian to form any idea of the *death of a person*, without believing that some *change* takes place on that person. Whether death shall increase or diminish his happiness, enlarge or contract his powers, still there must be more or less of *change* on his person, which cannot be said of God, but which may happen to every other being. There can be neither sufferings nor death, neither resurrection nor ascension, in as far as any *person* is concerned, without a *change* on the feelings, views, and prospects of the person. If such can be the case, let it be described.

AN ANTITRINITARIAN.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE BIBLE CHRISTIAN.]

SIR,—The following letter was written in answer to a most abusive article, which appeared in the February number of the Orthodox Presbyterian. I naturally expected, that as the editor of that work had published so violent an attack on my character and motives, by an anonymous writer, he would not refuse to publish a defence. This would have been no more than common justice and common honesty demanded. My answer to the unprovoked insolence of this person, calling himself “A Student,” has however been excluded; not by an open refusal, but by a series of mean and disgraceful equivocations, which it is astonishing to me that any honourable man would use.

In his introduction to the letter of his correspondent, this Editor affirms; “*We have gone to the expense of printing as many pages as were required for this article.*” This is generous, very generous! He goes to a considerable expence for the purpose of publishing this violent and personal attack upon me. But mark his conduct when I offer him my defence. *He refuses even to open my paper until I shall have promised to pay for every line of it as an advertisement.* (It would thus cost, as his publisher informs me, upwards of £5.) He well knows, that a young man who is maintaining himself at College principally by his own exertions, has not such sums to spare; and with great meanness takes advantage of this, to prevent me from disproving the gross misrepresentations of himself and his correspondent. In the note with which he has favoured me, he gives two reasons for not publishing my ‘defence,’ neither of which, as I shall *now prove*, are even “founded on fact.”

1. He refuses because the student has paid for his letter, and must not expect that mine shall be published on any other terms. This I prove to be false from his own words quoted above. “*We have gone to the expense of printing as many pages as were required for this article.*” Here the Editor distinctly affirms that the Student *did not pay*, he (the Editor) “having gone to the expense, &c.” You know, sir, the character to whom a good memory is so absolutely necessary.

2. He refuses to print my “defence” because “the Student’s letter was refused by the Bible Christian.”

This is most distinctly contradicted by the Rev. John Scott Porter, who edited that number, and whose note I subjoin. That the public may have an opportunity of judging for themselves, I shall first give the note sent to me by the Editor of the Orthodox Presbyterian.

Wednesday, 5 o'clock.

Mr. Doherty, Sir,

Your communication has just been put into our hands. You cannot expect that we will publish it *on any other terms, than those on which we received the Student's*, especially as *his was refused by the Bible Christian*, which had already published your "violent attack" on the Synod of Ulster. We have not opened the parcel containing your remarks, as on neither side can we receive any communication to occupy a place in our ordinary pages. Should you make the same proposal with the Student, we will then take your article into consideration, and if it be such as we can conscientiously circulate, we will give it a place.—Yours, &c.

THE ED. OF THE O. PRESBYTERIAN.

Having superintended the publication of the Bible Christian last month, I beg to state, with reference to the foregoing note,—that two communications, each signed "A Student," and each of considerable length, were put into my hands for insertion. These I caused to be returned to their respective writers, with an intimation, that it would be impossible for me to publish both; but that the writers might agree among themselves which of the communications seemed the more likely to answer their object: *and the one so selected should appear*, if the writer consented to give his real signature. This last stipulation, I expressly stated, was judged necessary, on account of the attacks which both of the articles contained, on Mr. Doherty's character and motives. As he had published his letter with his name appended, I did not choose to subject him to personal attack from anonymous correspondents. To this intimation I received no reply.

J. SCOTT PORTER.

After this complete exposure of his mean equivocations, I shall only add that the following letter is the same precisely that was refused admission into the Orthodox Presbyterian.

(*To the Editor of the " Orthodox Presbyterian."*)

SIR,—In the last number of the Periodical under your care, I perceive a long article, in which my opinions and my conduct are violently attacked; it is therefore necessary for me to come forward and offer a defence.

And first, I must express my gratitude for the CANDID and IMPARTIAL remarks with which you have thought fit to preface the letter of your correspondent. As on some of the points, however, to which you have alluded, your memory as well as your judgment seems to have failed, I shall take the liberty of refreshing the one, and correcting the other.

You assert, that in October last, I professed my "belief in the Trinity, Original Sin, &c., without any hesitation or explanation." Now, if you were present at that time, as you have asserted, a moment's reflection will convince you, that the above statement is not agreeable to truth. You will remember, as every one then present must remember, that there was not a single question proposed to any young man at that time, that might not have been answered by a conscientious atheist, so as to please the persons present. No one was asked, do you believe in the doctrine of the Trinity, &c.? but like the examinations in the Divinity Class, texts were demanded in support of such and such doctrines. Such is the simple truth, and *indeed I have frequently heard my fellow-students who were examined at that time, expressing their surprise that no declaration of belief had been required of them.* For myself I have no hesitation in affirming, distinctly and solemnly, that I was not required to assent to one single doctrine of Christianity, unless the mere quoting of certain texts be acknowledged as an expression of belief.

I grant, however, that had the above question been proposed, I would have answered in the affirmative. But, then, Mr. Editor, it is both unjust and unchristian in you to publish a most serious charge against me merely from report, when a single glance at my letter in the Bible Christian, to which you refer, would have shewn

(I state, for the satisfaction of some members of the Divinity Class, that no allusion to them was either made or intended in my former letter.)

the falseness of your information. You say,—“We have not SEEN Mr. Doherty’s letter,” (excellent critic!) “but we have HEARD that he has declared his doubt or disbelief of these and their kindred doctrines for some years.” No such sentiment as this is even hinted at in the paper to which you allude. I have there stated that my conduct in refusing to sign the Confession of Faith, is “the result of patient investigation, continued at intervals during the last six years.” May a man not examine and investigate during many years, and at length come to a resolution in a month, a week, or a day?

The common-place insinuation of my motives being wrong, I utterly despise. I have already given to the world the reasons for my past conduct, and on that subject my conscience fully acquits me. But I will not pass silently over the next sentence with which you have favoured me. You say that “one good, however, has been effected; the Synod has been relieved of one person unworthy of its membership.” Now, I charge you, as a Christian and an honest man, do you know, even by hearsay, of a single flaw, either in my literary or moral character? Certainly you do not; and you would no doubt, feel yourself compelled to acknowledge, that in these respects I am at least equal to any student of my own standing. Why, then, will the Editor of a religious publication indulge himself in the use of inuendoes so ungenerous and so unjust?

You conclude your lamentations over the “melancholy case” of “that unhappy young man who has been drawn aside by temptation” by asking, “why I have published my reasons for leaving the General Synod?” I answer, simply with a view of doing some good to that cause with which I now identify myself. I know that there are several young men of my acquaintance now engaged in searching the Scriptures, and reading controversial works, to see if the doctrines of Calvinism be according to the word of God. Upon these I supposed that my example and my reasons might have some influence. And indeed I am not without grounds of hope, that my “labour has not been in vain in the Lord.” These were my real motives—you may invent others, if such be your pleasure.

I shall now pass to the letter of the person calling himself a "Student." And here I must confess, that when I heard from some one, that my letter had been attacked in an article signed "a Student," I felt rather gratified than displeased, because I anticipated much pleasure from a fair and friendly discussion of the important points at issue. As for myself, I was quite determined, should I find it necessary to reply, to do so with becoming diffidence and urbanity, and not to let personality or bitterness have any share in this serious debate; expecting, of course, that a similar line of conduct would have been adopted by my opponent. In this expectation I have been altogether disappointed, for a great part of the letter just published, is filled with low, vulgar, and personal abuse of the most offensive kind. In every page, and in almost every paragraph, language like the following is introduced,—“foul insinuation,” “atrocious calumny,” “downright falsehood,” “unblushing effrontery,” &c. &c. Now let me assure the author of this letter, that such language is disgraceful only to the person who utters it; and such epithets, however custom may have reconciled him to their use, are equally improper for a Christian, and unbecoming in a gentleman; nor can the excuse, which he might no doubt urge, of a neglected education and mean habits, do more than palliate the offence.

With his piece of gratuitous impertinence respecting my relations, I shall not delay you, as I understand that even his own party are thoroughly disgusted by it. To show, you, however, that he is merely abusing at random, and that he knows nothing whatever of the objects of his abuse, I may inform him that the Presbyterian congregations of Antrim, Randalstown, and Dunain, were supplied, long before he was born, with pastors from the family of the person whom he has designated a “novus homo, as far as Presbyterianism is concerned.” Let me add, that the “creed of some that are gone” was no more “Proteus-like,” than that of Luther, Calvin, or Servetus. But enough of this. His misrepresentations that are of a merely personal nature, I shall neither answer nor dwell upon. They always injure instead of forwarding the cause of truth. Let me pass at once to his observations upon the reasons which I have advanced for leaving the General Synod.

In looking over the coarsely expressed, and abusive article before me, it would appear that your correspondent means to say, that I have offended in two points :

1. By misrepresenting the General Synod.
2. By misrepresenting the Confession of Faith.

I shall, therefore, neglect the tedious verbiage with which his letter is principally occupied, and come at once to examine whether or not the above assertions are correct.

1. I have said, that there is a large and respectable body of Arminians in the Synod. My opponent is *perfectly convinced that this is true* ; HE DOES NOT, AND HE DARES NOT DENY IT. Of what use, then, is his silly quibbling about my means of information ? I know it from universal and uncontradicted report. I know it from the evidence given before the Commissioners of Education for Ireland, and I am convinced that many of the pious and respectable ministers who hold those opinions, would have no hesitation in avowing them. I have not, therefore, misrepresented the General Synod in this particular.

2. I have maintained, that “there is no reason to believe, either from Scripture or from Church history, that an uninspired form of words was made use of as a Creed, by the Apostles, or their immediate successors ;” and “no Synodical committees seem to have been permitted in their times to tyrannize over the consciences of the brethren.

Is there anything wrong here ? Will not every history of the Church that is in existence, bear unequivocal testimony to the truth of this assertion. I challenge this “Student,” or any of his party to produce even a shadow of proof, that any creed composed by men was known in the first ages of the church ; therefore, I do not misrepresent the General Synod when I say, that by introducing merely human compositions as tests of faith, the customs of primitive Christianity are departed from.

Let your correspondent consider the following propositions. As a rule of Faith and Practice, the Scriptures are either sufficient, or they are not sufficient. If they are sufficient, then all Creeds and Confessions of Faith, are superfluous, unnecessary, and absurd. If they are not sufficient, pray, who has a right to supply the deficiency ?

3. Your correspondent seems to think that I err in denominating the Confession of Faith a supplement, and an addition to the bible. Now, my reasons for doing so are simply these. The Confession of Faith was made nearly sixteen centuries after the canon of Scripture was completed, and it has since been put on an equality with the Scriptures; inasmuch as a belief in the doctrines contained in it, is indispensable for all candidates for the ministry, in connexion with the Synod of Ulster. In other words, it is thought necessary that men should believe, not only in the Scriptures, but also in this human composition which has been added to the Scriptures, as of equal authority. There may be a mistake in this reasoning, but there is not any intentional misrepresentation.

I have said, that the Confession of Faith, by maintaining that the Father is eternal and uncreated; the Son eternal and uncreated; and the Holy Ghost eternal and uncreated; trenches upon the doctrine of the unity of God. As in this view of the Trinity there would seem to be, not one Eternal, but three Eternals; not one God, but three Gods.

Such is my conscientious opinion on the subject; but far be it from me to speak positively or dogmatically upon so difficult a point of doctrine; concerning which the best and wisest of men have differed. And let me inform this "Student" that nothing can be more absurd than his method of bringing forward one passage of the Confession of Faith in opposition to another, as this only proves, (what I never disputed,) that the most contradictory assertions are contained in that work. I have not, so far as I know, misrepresented the Confession of Faith in this point.

The next sentence of my letter which your Correspondent takes up, is that in which I have opposed the dictates of reason and Scripture to that most abominable doctrine, which the "Confession of Faith" maintains; viz. that God has from all eternity decreed one part of mankind to everlasting happiness, and the other to everlasting torment, without any foresight of good works in the one case, or evil works in the other. Is this misrepresenting the "Confession of Faith?" Every man who will reflect upon this doctrine, will perceive, that it is not partly, but entirely, similar to that of the ancient

and modern fatalists. What does the fatalist believe? Just that every action, and every event is the result of a certain unalterable necessity; that whatever any man does, in certain circumstances, he could not by any possibility have avoided doing; that motives arising from the nature of things over which the mind has no power, do invariably and irresistibly influence the will. Call this fatalism, necessity, or Calvinism, any thing you please; the doctrine remains unchanged.

———"That which we call a rose,
By any other name would smell as sweet."

Indeed there is one point in which the ancient fatalists have a decided superiority over the modern Calvinists; for, although both parties have regarded man as irresistibly influenced to act as he does act; yet it is only the Calvinist who dooms him to an eternity of torment, for doing what he could not possibly avoid.

I could not in the compass of a single letter explain the various texts which your Correspondent has quoted, but I am justified in saying according to his own graceful dialect, that many of them "have no relevancy whatever to the subject," and the others can be shown to refer merely to the election of some nations to the privileges of Christianity. That the tendency of this doctrine of absolute predestination is always bad, I still maintain; and should your Correspondent take the trouble of looking into Bishop Mant's Bampton Lectures, he will there find ample historical evidence in proof of my opinions. One example must suffice at present. Cromwell was a stern necessitarian, and after the commission of some of those atrocious crimes, which he so frequently perpetrated, he was found excusing himself on the plea of absolute necessity, he only fulfilled the decrees of God; for God "hath fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass."

I shall now place a passage of Scripture, side by side with an assertion contained in the "Confession of Faith," and let the followers of Calvin reconcile them if they can. In Ezek. 33 chap. 11 ver. it is thus written: "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live." On the other hand, the "Confession of Faith" boldly affirms, that, "the rest of mankind," (that

is, the unfortunate reprobates) "God was pleased to pass by and to ORDAIN THEM TO DISHONOR AND WRATH for their sins, TO THE PRAISE OF HIS GLORIOUS JUSTICE;" will your Correspondent deny that these words form part of the Confession of Faith," or will he explain them away after his easy but rather free method of paraphrasing the text?

4. I have said that, the "Confession of Faith" represents the guilt of Adam's first transgression as being imputed to his posterity; and some of them as perishing eternally on account of this guilt. Now, sir, how comes it, that your Correspondent attempts to dispute this? Is not the doctrine of imputed guilt one of the principal and fundamental doctrines of Calvinism? But I shall set the matter at rest by a few extracts.—The Confession of Faith affirms, that "they (our first parents) being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed," and in the next paragraph this "original corruption of our nature" is declared to be "really and properly sin," then "every sin both ORIGINAL and actual, doth in its own nature bring guilt upon the sinner, whereby he is bound over to the wrath of God and curse of the law, and so made subject to death; with all its *miseries, spiritual, temporal, and eternal.*" Now mark the modest assertion of this 'Student,' "The confession of Faith does not in any one passage maintain, that any human being will be punished eternally on account of Adam's guilt." Here is effrontery with a vengeance. If your Correspondent be indeed a "student," I perceive that he will have no difficulty in signing the "Confession of Faith." The doctrines which he cannot believe he *may explain away*, he has a decided advantage over the other pilgrims of Zion who are travelling with him; he has found a method of "boiling his peas." Let your Correspondent, however, believe it or not, the above doctrine is certainly stated with great distinctness in the "Confession of Faith," and in the Shorter Catechism, which contains a pretty good abstract of the former, these words are used: "All mankind by their (*i.e.* our first parents') fall, lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse; and so made liable to all the miseries in this life, to death itself, and to the *pains of hell* FOR EVER." The confession of Faith is long, and

tedious, and very little read or known ; therefore, I am not surprised that this “student” should be unacquainted with its contents ; but not to know his catechism,—oh ! it is really too bad.

That there are elect, and reprobate, infants, as well as men, the “Confession of Faith” maintains. Thus in the 10th chapter, “Elect infants dying in infancy are regenerated and saved by Christ through the spirit.” Now, if some be elected and saved, the remainder must be omitted, and damned ; hence, in the next paragraph, “Others not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the word, &c. yet they never truly come to Christ, and therefore cannot be saved.” So much for the children, now for the heathen—“*Much less can men not professing the Christian religion be saved in any other way whatsoever.*” Your Correspondent has quoted this passage, and yet he coolly asserts that I utter a falsehood, when I say that there are “assertions contained in this standard of Orthodoxy respecting the condemnation of the whole heathen world.”

But decidedly the most amusing part of this strange epistle is that in which your Correspondent drags in “the Rev. John Paul,” “the Covenanter,” “Church Reform,” “shackled representatives,” “political creeds,” &c. &c. things that have no more to do with the subject than “Noah, his sons, and his sons’ wives” have. Let the people choose their representatives just as they please, and let the church look to its own concerns ; I take nothing to do with politics ; it would neither become my age, nor the situation I aspire to fill. The stormy politics of the world are not suitable to the character of a Christian minister ; your Correspondent might therefore have spared his “boisterous and angry” rant in favour of toryism, as on such subjects I shall be silent. But never shall I assent to that doctrine which the 23d chapter of the Confession of Faith maintains, viz. that “the civil magistrate hath power and it is his duty, “to take order that all *blasphemies and heresies be suppressed*”—“to call synods to be present at them, and to provide, that whatever is transacted in them be according to the mind of God.” “Heresies can only be suppressed by moral restraint,” says your Correspondent, and this is the meaning of the above passage—

how puerile ! Every one knows that the “suppressing heresies” here spoken of, simply meant at the time when those words were first indited, punishing the heretics by fine, imprisonment, or bodily suffering, and that the Papists of those days were persecuted in accordance with the above precept. Indeed the words evidently mean that every magistrate is in duty bound to punish those who differ from him in their religious sentiments; and neither the Rev. John Paul, nor any other person, need attempt to prove that this is not their meaning. Your correspondent has said nothing towards EXPLAINING the Magistrate’s power of calling synods being present at them, and overruling their resolves. Perhaps he is not to be present in the body, but only to exercise a kind of spiritual presence, which would be more convenient than the former, though somewhat difficult to reconcile with the *words* of the “Confession of Faith.”

In conclusion, you will observe, that I have passed, silently, over the vulgar insolence with which this person calling himself “a student,” thinks fit to wind up every paragraph of his letter. No provocation shall induce me to imitate his scandalous example. Let us always be calm, and honourable, at least, if we cannot agree, nor is it necessary for him to ransack the vocabulary of blackguardism for epithets to cast on his opponent. When men differ conscientiously on such matters, I think neither of them ought to charge the other, (as your somewhat vulgar correspondent charges me) with “foul untruths;” because differences of judgment upon disputed points do not amount to what are called, “falsehoods.”

As for myself, I entertain no resentment, on account of the many gross and personal insults which this letter contains; as I have invariably attributed them, not to malice, but to a lamentable ignorance of the language, and manners of polite life.

Your obedient servant,

WM. H. DOHERTY.

Belfast, March 14th, 1883.

(*To the Editor of the Bible Christian.*)

SIR,—Should you consider any of the following articles worthy of a place in your pages, I shall occasionally furnish you with others of a similar nature, on some of the leading texts and passages of Scripture, of which Trinitarians have made a most unwarranted monopoly, and by mistaken views of which they endeavour to work themselves into a belief in the reality of a doctrine, which, by their spiritual guides, they are led to estimate as of soul-saving importance; but which is at best merely a creature of their own imagination, a relic of the ancient, and a phantom of the too prevalent superstition of the present age, and in point of absurdity is a blot upon any religion that has the claim of being rational or divine.

Gen. i. 26. "And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness."

This is the first that occurs in the order of Scripture, among other *stock*-texts which Trinitarians resort to in every emergency, when their favourite doctrine is called in question. The pronoun "*us*" which occurs in this passage is supposed to denote a plurality of Gods in consultation respecting the creation of man. It may be shown, however, by a very appropriate and familiar illustration, that the use of the term in this announcement, instead of implying plurality or number, only indicates in a more striking manner the authority of the person using it. For example, in proclamations issued by the King, we never find him speaking in his own name, or *individually*, but invariably making use of the plural number. "*We* the King—*we* William the Fourth—*we* the Lord Lieutenant, order or enjoin, &c." Or, "it is *our* wish" that such laws be put into execution. Now, I ask, does it ever occur to any one from the language here used, that there are more persons than *one* speaking; that it is one King addressing another, or one Lord Lieutenant another? On the contrary, do we not know and infer at once, that it is really but one King, or one Lord Lieutenant speaking solely in his own name and authority; or, to say the most of it, the King addressing his ministers and government. We

must form our ideas, then, of Divine decrees and announcements by reference to human, and to the mode of expression common among men. The sacred writers did so, and we have no other standard. When God, therefore, is represented as saying, "Let us make man in our image," what conclusion we are naturally led to draw, but that he issued the command in his absolute and indisputable prerogative as the *Creator*—that he was not in the determination to make man in that likeness subject to any foreign control, or influenced by any other authority—that He required no external aid or concurrence before He proceeded "to make man"—but that he spoke in the full and unlimited capacity of Sovereign Lord of the Universe, with free power in his own hands, to make man after what manner, or in whatever likeness he thought proper.

But what authority have the followers of Athanasius or Calvin for inferring that there was a "Trinity" of persons holding council when this announcement was uttered? Or that it was one Person of their Trinity addressing the other? Does the passage itself give the least intimation that such was the case? Might there not, for anything we know, have been ten, twenty, a hundred, a thousand, or any indefinite number present, when God issued this decree? May he not have been addressing his legions of angels, and ten thousand times ten thousand of his ministering spirits, whom we may suppose to have peopled the heavenly mansions many ages previous to the creation of Man.

But suppose we view the expression "let us," to which so much importance is attached, according to the Trinitarian sense, does the very fact of God issuing the command, imply authority and superiority on his part to which the others had no claim? The nature of the previous passage proves this. It is God, in the strict Unitarian sense of the word, who is supposed to be speaking throughout the whole.—v. 3. "And *God said*, let there be light, and there was light."—v. 6. "And *God said*, let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, &c." and so on throughout the different stages of creation, God, "the Almighty" is represented as the Speaker and the Agent. Are we to suppose, then, that when he had finished the different departments of the

material world, that he suddenly changed his character, and became quite another Being when he came to the last object—the creation of man? Are we to imagine that He who acted strictly in the capacity of *one* throughout the previous part of the work, divided himself at this stage, and resolved himself into *three*? Most irrational and unscriptural conclusion! On the contrary, is it not unquestionable and beyond all doubt, at least to every impartial enquirer, that it was still the same Being, speaking and acting throughout the whole procedure. And, as a proof of this, let us particularly observe the subsequent verse, 27. “So God created man in *his own* image; male and female created *he* them.”

The words “his own” and “He,” are sufficiently explanatory, and corroborative of our position, and do away at once with any ambiguity or false meaning which may be forced from the passage by those who are more concerned about the success of a favourite doctrine, than the cause of truth.

But may not the use of the pronoun “us” be accounted for, thus—During the creation of the different departments of the natural world, the angels of God stood as mute and astonished spectators of the scene, impressed with the most exalted sentiments of reverence and admiration, at beholding such marvellous displays of the wisdom, power, and greatness of God. But another accession to intellectual being was about to be made, more calculated to excite their wonder, and call forth their interest, viz. the *Creation of Man*. He was to be a creature bearing similitude to themselves, and with whom they were to hold communion. Now, we cannot suppose, in this case, that when God said, “Let *us* make man in our image;” that He was asking their aid, or that they, even the highest order of celestial beings, could actually contribute any, to Divine Omnipotence. But without taking by surprise, so as to excite their jealousy, if we can suppose them capable of such; by placing a being before them of such exalted rank and dignity, he prepares them for the event by communicating his intention, and by making them, though not participators in the work, the close and confidential witnesses of this mighty object.

The expression, however, is common in every-day life, and may be easily accounted for as being *human language* at the best. Nothing is more common, for instance, though we apply the illustration with all reverence, than to hear a skilful and good-natured workman, after having proceeded a certain length in forming any piece of mechanism in which he, or the spectator appeared to be interested, saying,—“come, *let us* proceed to join, adjust, or finish some other part, and our work shall soon be complete;”—although the spectator has nothing to do in the matter more than the mere pleasure of witnessing the skill of the artist, and the success of his operation.

If the argument, however, which Trinitarians adduce in support of their doctrine, from this passage, were worth further refutation, we might answer them by a far more summary mode of reasoning than we have yet brought forward. We might tell them, though it will no doubt cause them to look more than usually grave, but when it is affirmed of God, that He said, “Let us make man in our image, &c.”—*that he said no such thing*—that He did not make use of a single syllable of the words here attributed to him, nor of the original Hebrew, of which they are a translation. “God is a Spirit;” and we have a different idea of the spiritual and invisible attributes of the Deity, than to suppose, that He would announce the execution of the several plans of his magnificent creation in *human language*, even before language or *man himself* had any existence. I look upon the whole account of creation as given in the first Chapter of Genesis, though the result of inspired knowledge in regard to the *truths* which it conveys, as the language of *man*, *not of God*, and as descriptive of the manner in which the Almighty *may be supposed* to have proceeded in the formation and arrangement of the different departments of the material universe. God formed the whole system of nature by his own *sovereign will*, by his *invisible agency* and *unlimited power*; which agency, and which power, the words “God said” as made use of by the sacred writer, is only another mode of expressing and rendering more level to our understanding.

This narrative, however, is of the utmost importance to us, and to the Christian world at large, if rightly

viewed, as establishing without controversy, the first and most momentous principle of all true religion; viz. that *God is one*, and that *He alone* is the underived, uncreated, and independent source of all things, both in Heaven and on earth. J. C.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE BIBLE CHRISTIAN.]

SIR,—THAT no human creature inherits infallibility, was a doctrine early impressed upon my mind, which grew with my growth, and strengthened with my strength. That man who was fallible had no authority in religion to lord it over the understanding and conscience of a fellow-creature, appeared to me a truth self-evident. Human creeds, confessions and catechisms, decrees of councils and overtures of synods, I believed no further, than they agreed with the plain language of the revelation of God; and as to the many or the few who prescribed to me articles of faith, and assured me that unless I would believe them, I should perish everlastingly; I imagined I had a right to require a miracle in proof of their divine mission, when I could not find such doctrines in the Bible. Convinced that I was accountable to God for the portion of understanding which he had given me, and for the light of revelation under which I was educated, I was endeavouring to understand and believe for myself, that my faith might regulate my conduct in such a manner as to prepare for the solemn judgment of the day in which God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to the Gospel. Educated under the ministry of an individual who was a member of a presbytery which was called Old Light, (as the abused term *orthodox* had not become popular,) and hearing this doctrine constantly inculcated from the pulpit, that my only master was Christ, I considered I would be as culpable for taking any other for my spiritual guide as I would be for rejecting the mediator of God's appointment, and addressing him through one of my own contrivance. Under such impressions I did not place implicit faith in the interpretations of the scriptures given in confessions of faith without examining what our Lord said upon the subject,

lest I might take the authority of an individual like myself instead of the authority of the Son of God. When the Saviour commands his followers to strive to enter in at the strait gate, for many will seek to enter in and shall not be able, I concluded that he intended to represent the great necessity which mankind are under to take pains to strive and use their greatest exertions to enter into future bliss, and not to assure his hearers of the small number of those who shall obtain eternal life after all their care and unwearied application. Upon our Lord's declaration in the words quoted, many found the two following doctrines: That the number of those who shall be saved, will be exceedingly small, and that multitudes may endeavour to obtain happiness, and fail at last, not so much for want of sincere and earnest endeavours on their part, as because they are not in the number of those whom God has elected and decreed from eternity to everlasting life.

Such are the conclusions which have been drawn from several texts in Scripture, calculated to fill the minds of those who indulge them with gloomy notions and dreadful apprehensions respecting futurity in despite of their earnest endeavours to recommend themselves to the divine favour by the sincerity of their hearts and the innocence of their moral characters. To the weak-minded, the ignorant, the superstitious and the melancholy, there is perhaps no reflection more distressing, more injurious to self-enjoyment, more discouraging to the vigorous prosecution of a holy life than the consideration that the number of the saved will be exceedingly small, and the uncertainty whether they be in the number of those who are elected to eternal life. The design of the few following considerations is to point out the absurdity of the inferences mentioned, which many draw from the words of him who came to save those who otherwise were lost, and to endeavour to impress upon the minds of all, that whether few or many shall be saved is a matter about which they need not be much concerned; that their uncertainty whether they be the objects of a particular foreordination and election should give them no manner of uneasiness; but that it is the duty of every rational accountable creature to make his calling and election sure in the discharge of the duties required of him, and

commit his eternal condition into the hand of a merciful God, who will reward every man according to the manner he has conducted himself in the day of his merciful visitation.

In proof of the doctrine, that few shall be saved, the following portions of revelation are produced. "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Strive to enter in at the strait gate, for many shall seek to enter in and shall not be able." In words still more pointed our Lord declares, "that wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that enter in thereat:"—but he adds,—“strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth to life, and few there be that find it.” From such expressions, many form gloomy calculations respecting the number of those who shall enjoy future happiness, and those who shall be doomed to future misery. These portions of scripture rationally considered, appear to have a contrary meaning. Instead of such melancholy considerations to the sincere penitent and upright Christian, the gospel of our divine Saviour speaks a more soothing language, opens up brighter prospects of futurity, and administers comfort to those who labour and are heavy laden.

They who make such melancholy calculations respecting the small number of those who will be saved, uncharitably exclude all the human race who have not been favoured with the Christian dispensation. Such, say they, "who have never heard the gospel, know not Jesus Christ, and believe not in him, cannot be saved, be they ever so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature or the law of that religion which they prefer." Such is the sentence recorded in the Larger Catechism. Should this be true, all of every age and nation who have ever heard the gospel, cannot believe in what they never heard, and therefore must be doomed to eternal misery. Christians who believe in such a doctrine, should inquire into the real meaning of the apostle's language. "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth him and walketh in righteousness, is acceptable unto him."

But this is not a resting point with many who consider themselves learned in theology. They condemn all their fellow Christians who do not believe in a certain system of what they denominate Orthodox principles, and even many who are sound in faith may at last be cast away, because they are not in the number of those on whom the Eternal has placed his love. Should any who are sound in belief fail in obtaining happiness, the reason appears evident that they did not add to their faith virtue. Their faith ended in speculation; it never influenced their practice, it never wrought by love, it produced no fruits of righteousness. To purity of heart they were strangers; in their lives they were careless and vicious; they had faith, but were wanting in charity; gratitude to God and benevolence to man formed no part of their character. They were at no pains to walk worthy of the blessings of gospel dispensation, but neglected to do justly, to love mercy, and walk humbly with God.

That many take the broad way and perish in it is a powerful argument to vigilance and activity. It teaches circumspection in conduct, but is productive of no hazard, doubt, nor danger, to them who have already entered upon the path that leads to glory. The strait gate which leads to eternal life is a phrase expressive of the difficulties which attend a religious course preparatory to everlasting happiness. In this state of preparation, difficulties must be surmounted, temptations resisted, and victory obtained over the enemies of our salvation. The Christian life is compared to a race which we must run, a race in which every power must be excited, and every nerve strained that we may obtain the prize. Were heaven and future happiness disposed by mere accident, or if I may use the expression, in the way of lottery, in which for a few who draw prizes thousands meet with blanks, notwithstanding the same care and diligence used by all, the most courageous would have reason to tremble at the apprehension of their eternal destiny. But blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, this is not the case. None ever was or will be miserable but in consequence of his own fault, and they who cultivate the principles

of pure and undefiled religion in time, cultivate at the same time the seeds of future happiness, and lay up for themselves treasure in heaven for eternity.

Should the few observations which I have made, meet your approbation, and should you think proper to afford them a place in your valuable publication, at some future period I will do myself the honour of sending you another letter upon this subject, and giving my view of the several portions of Scripture by which Calvinists imagine they prove this awful doctrine.

ANN.

EXTRACT

FROM A TRACT ENTITLED, A REVIEW OF THE GENUINE
DOCTRINES OF CHRISTIANITY.

IF we take a view of all our Saviour's discourses, parables, and public instructions, it will appear plainly, that the general tendency of them is, to inculcate upon his disciples and followers, the sincere practice of piety, humility, benevolence, and the most exalted virtue; and to enforce this by imprinting deeply in their minds the doctrine of a future state of rewards and punishments; and by forcibly pointing out the wisdom of sacrificing our temporal to our eternal interests, whenever they come in competition with each other. And with these ideas of the design of the Christian religion, we shall find the representations given of it by the apostles, in other parts of the New Testament, perfectly to coincide.

We are very far from finding, in the accounts which are given, in the acts of the apostles, of the discourses made by the apostles in the promulgation of Christianity, any of those unintelligible and irrational doctrines which have been taught in later times. Their discourses are intelligible, consistent, and repugnant to no principle of reason. Of this, St. Paul's oration to the Athenians is a striking instance. After having censured their idolatry and superstition, he proceeds to preach to them the true God, the Creator of the world; and to give them juster sentiments of him than they then appeared to entertain. He shews the absurdity of considering God as confined to temples, or as a local deity;

and teaches them, that God was not to be worshipped by men, as though he needed any thing of them ; because it was from him that they received LIFE, AND BREATH, AND ALL THINGS. He represents the Deity, not as a God of a particular country or people, but as the God and Father of the whole human race ; and thence infers the absurdity of representing him by any image. Having established these first principles of natural religion, he goes on to preach to them some of the more peculiar doctrines of the Christian revelation. " The times of this ignorance," he says, (speaking of the superstition and idolatry which had prevailed among mankind) " God winked at ; but now commandeth all men every where to repent : because he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained ; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." We find a striking difference between the method here taken by this great apostle, and that which has been since taken by many modern preachers of the gospel. The apostle establishes revelation on the foundations of natural religion. He urges them to repentance, as that which it was the end and design of Christianity to promote ; and, as a motive to it, preaches to them the doctrine of a future state of retribution ; in which Jesus was to preside as the supreme judge : and, for a proof of his divine mission and authority, he urges his resurrection from the dead. Not a single word is said by him of the natural incapacity of men to do any thing which could recommend them to God ; nor does he once tell them, that a reliance on the merits or righteousness of Christ would be sufficient for their salvation : which, if they had really been such capital and essential doctrines of Christ's religion, as they have since been represented to be, he certainly, when he was thus preaching the gospel, could not possibly have omitted.

When St. Peter preached to the Jews, after having healed a lame man in the temple, and represented that miracle, which he declared to have been done by the power of Christ, as a proof of his divine mission ; he adds, " repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out ;" and concludes with tel-

ling them, that God had raised up his son Jesus, and sent him to bless" them, "in turning away every one of them from their iniquities." And when Paul and Barnabas preached to the Lystrians, their words are, "We preach unto you, that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein: who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless, he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." The natural ability of man to conform to the rules of religion appears here to be clearly implied; and also his ability of discerning the existence and character of the Deity by the mere light of nature.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

OBITUARY.

ON Sunday, the 3d of March, at his house in Donegall Place, in the 72d year of his age, John Stephenson Ferguson, Esq. Endowed with a clear and well cultivated understanding, he devoted much of his time and talents to the welfare of that community in which he was brought up, and of which he was 'so respectable a member. By the suffrages of his fellow townsmen he had long continued to enjoy those civic honours, the bestowing of which bore ample testimony to *his* merits and *their* respect. In religion he was the modest yet firm advocate of the rights of conscience. In politics he was the friend of freedom: and if it were possible for any man to moderate the discordant elements of faction which have of late distracted this once harmonious country, none was better fitted for the task than the subject of this brief memoir; for his manners were mild, gentlemanlike, and conciliatory; steady and consistent in his own opinions, he was scrupulously careful to give offence to none. In the walks of domestic life, few could surpass him in those virtues which adorn the character of the husband and the father.—His closing scene was in unison with his general conduct. He bore with dignified resignation his last trials, and in the fulness of Christian, faith yielded up his spirit into the hands of God. His remains, followed by a numerous concourse, comprising men of all parties, were deposited in the family cemetery in the New Burying Ground, on the 5th ult.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Viator will perceive that we have an article on the subject of his letter.—We shall be glad to hear from "Ann" again.

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STATE OF SOCIETY AMONG THE JEWS.*

THE people of Israel and Judah consisted of thirteen tribes or great families, descended from twelve brothers, and by supernatural aid they were planted in "a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths, that spring out of vallies and hills; a land of wheat and barley, and vines, and fig-trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil, olives, and honey, whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills they might dig brass." It was not, however, one of those luxuriant countries of the East, which abound with every thing to discourage labour, and to foster indolence. In its natural state, into which it has now, in a great measure, relapsed, it was rugged and wild; but when cultivated by the skill and labour of a temperate and industrious people, capable of producing every thing that such a people can require; "a land in which they might eat bread without scarceness, and not lack any thing." Such was the country that the Almighty chose for his favoured people.

Twelve provinces were assigned to as many tribes, as their exclusive property; each family occupied a particular district, and every man lived in the midst of his relations. The land was inalienable. It could neither be separated from the family, nor the family from the land. The thirteenth tribe was set apart for the functions of religion and law, and to it were allotted forty-eight towns that they might be distributed through the country, having no share in the land; and they were maintained by public contribution, that they might be at leisure to apply to their peculiar studies and occupations.

* For Moses vide p. 99. For Joseph and his Brethren, vide p. 51.

As the whole nation was one family, descended from a common head, so the government was patriarchal. The authority which the head of a family derives from nature was so far strengthened by the force of law, as to secure habits of obedience without endangering harmony and union. Each town with its adjacent district, was regulated by the mild influence of the elders, who were the immediate progenitors of a considerable number of the inhabitants, and kinsmen to them all. In a more extensive district, authority was vested in the hands of the lineal descendant of one of the sons of its patriarch; and the lineal descendant of the patriarch himself was dignified with the title and authority of prince of the tribe. These federal tribes were united in one body by the influence of religion, law, and common interest: and the whole was governed by the wisdom of a general council, and by divine oracles delivered, on important occasions, from the mercy-seat in the sanctuary of the temple. Such seems to be an outline of that form of society in which the Israelites were designed to live. The regulations and institutions which were more particularly calculated to promote their welfare and secure their innocence, I shall now attempt briefly to describe.

Under such a constitution, the happiness and security of the people may seem, at first sight, to be so far provided for, that they might live safely, every man under his own vine, and under his own fig-tree; but a more attentive review of the history of man will convince us, that though the basis of human happiness should be laid in wise and liberal institutions, grounded upon enlarged and rational principles of right, yet the comfort of life depends more on daily intercourse than political councils, on the alleviation of distress than the inheritance of privileges, and on protection against wrongs than the exercise of power.

The value of liberty consists in enabling men to enjoy these advantages in security and at pleasure. Although these personal enjoyments, this interchange of humane attentions, this defence against injury, might appear to be sufficiently secured by residence amongst members of the same family, they were further protected by positive injunctions; and these injunctions were not the cold

dictates of moralists, casuists, or economists ; nor were they only legal statutes. Among the Israelites, politics were incorporated with religion ; the sanctions of law and the authority of God were identified ; their author was the same, and obedience to law and piety to God had the same signification.

The state of society in which this people were placed by Providence, was that of pasturage and tillage, the intermediate stage between the miseries of barbarism and the vices of refined society. They exercised such arts, and carried on such manufactures, as were necessary for their own accommodation ; but they were debarred from foreign commerce by the restrictions laid on their intercourse with idolaters, which was essential to the purpose for which they were established, by the prohibition to raise money by alienating their land, and to lend or borrow from each other on interest, and the very nature of their religion, which was calculated only for a confined and limited society.

How necessary soever the present plan of society may have become, whatever difficulties may stand in the way of a change, I believe every philosophical and religious mind contemplates it rather as a necessary evil than a positive good. This whirlpool of foreign wars and intestine dissensions ; this continual dread of poverty and competition in riches and splendour, and the eager pursuit of unbounded commerce, and unwholesome manufactures ; this appetite for enormous wealth and luxury, and the consequent increase of vices, crimes, and punishments ; this tumult and incessant toil in which mankind are now involved, can hardly be compared by any with the calm and innocent life of the husbandman and the shepherd, enjoying in plenty and peace the produce of their farms and their flocks. When to the innocence of the pastoral, and the plenty of the agricultural state, are superadded the blessings of family intercourse, and sublime or consolatory principles of religion, I have no doubt, that it is that stage in which mankind enjoy the highest felicity, and exercise the most amiable virtues ; and though some should contend, that a more complicated state of society may sometimes give rise to more exalted virtues, and more exquisite enjoyment, I must maintain, on the contrary, that it more frequently occasions enormous crimes, flagitious vices,

and inhuman sufferings, that are unknown in a nation of shepherds and husbandmen. Rural felicity has not only been the continual theme of those fine geniuses who have been able to abstract themselves from the bustle of the world; but it is that state to which we all look with longing eyes, when we can extricate ourselves from this unnatural state of things; and to which we vainly attempt to return after we have disqualified ourselves for its enjoyment by a long indulgence of artificial and unnatural habits.

If any additional encomium were necessary, I might say, that this was the state of society selected by Providence for the chosen people, and when this mode of life was sweetened by the security, the comforts, and the tender affections of family society, when, as far as the eye could reach, or the foot could travel, every individual was surrounded by kinsmen and friends, and could address and be addressed by every person he met, with titles of endearment; and the whole of this great family were animated with the principles and sentiments of a sublime and humane religion, I think I may venture to assert, that the state of society prepared for the Israelites was worthy that gracious and almighty Being by whom it was devised.

When a man built a house, he was to make a battlement on the roof, that he bring not innocent blood on his house if any man fall from it, as they spent most of their time on the roofs of their dwellings. While a man remained in this hereditary and unalienable mansion, he ruled over a pious, harmonious, and obedient family, joining in their daily prayers, and talking of that wonderful system of providence under which they lived, "when they lay down and when they rose," and teaching the law of God diligently to his children, "as he sat in the house, and as he walked by the way." Happy dwelling! where tenderness to the servant was enjoined both by religion and law; and the master was required to remember that he was a bondsman in the land of Egypt! and where humanity to the labouring ox, and even to the vagrant bird, was prescribed by the God of mercy, who hears the ravens when they cry, and without whom a sparrow cannot fall to the ground.

If he travelled from home, he was entitled to feed on the corn or grapes in the fields or vineyards, through

which he passed ; if any accident befel him or his beast, it was a point of religion with every one to help him : if he sojourned in a house or town, the inhabitants were instructed and enjoined to minister to his wants, and to remember that they were strangers in the land of Egypt ; and that God would hear the cry of the stranger and the poor.

If any one saw his ox or his sheep going astray, he was bound to take them to their owner. If he found any of his property and knew not the owner, he was to take it to his own house till enquired for, and then restore it. Nay, if any one met his enemy's ox or ass going astray, he was surely to bring it back to him again ; if he saw the ass of him that hated him lying under his burden, he was surely to help him to raise him up.

The constitution of the Hebrew commonwealth guarded against exorbitant wealth and excessive poverty, by a variety of regulations. In fact, if enormous riches be prevented, extreme penury can hardly take place. But if nations depart from the golden mean on one side, in the same proportion will they desert it on the other. The positive laws which prevented an extravagant accumulation of money, were the discouragement of foreign commerce, the equal distribution of the land, its inalienable nature, and the years of sabbath and jubilee. But if a man should, by fair means, acquire an extensive property, he was protected ; and there are cautions against partiality to the poor, as well as favour to the rich. "Thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty ; but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour." Since, however, there is more danger of favour to the great, than of undue partiality to the indigent, and the necessities of poverty stand peculiarly in need of protection and relief, the Mosaical law abounds with provisions in favour of the needy. "Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob him :—the wages of him that is hired, shall not abide with thee all night until the morning. If thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen into decay with thee, then thou shalt relieve him ; nay, though he be a stranger or a sojourner. When thou cuttest down thy harvest, and hast forgotten a sheaf in the field, thou shalt

not go again and fetch it, it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. When thou dost lend thy brother any thing, thou shalt not go into his house to fetch his pledge. Thou shalt stand abroad, and the man to whom thou dost lend, shall bring out the pledge abroad unto thee; and if the man be poor, thou shalt not sleep with the pledge. No man shall take the upper or the lower mill-stone to pledge, for he taketh a man's life to pledge. Thou shalt not oppress a hired servant, that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brethren, or of the strangers that are in the land. Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling-block before the blind; but thou shalt fear thy God."

Thus was a Hebrew protected and relieved if he fell into decay and beggary. But as there were various other species of distress, these were provided for by the institutions of the sabbath day, the sabbatical year, and the year of jubilee, and the regulations with respect to war. In these, piety was united with humanity. While they were standing, and indeed miraculous memorials of the system of providential care under which they lived, they were so ordered as to be subservient to the purposes of charity. The religious exercises, domestic society, and the periodical rest from labour enjoyed both by the people and their cattle on the sabbath, are experienced by ourselves, and therefore require neither explanation nor encomium.

Every seventh year the land was to lie fallow, and even the produce of the vineyard and orchard were to be unappropriated; and whatever corn or fruit was produced spontaneously was to be the joint property of the proprietor and the poor. In this year also there was a general release of debts to the *poor*. (Deut. xv. 4.) Every bond was cancelled, and every pledge restored; and lest the periodical approach of this discharge should prevent them from lending to their neighbours, they were expressly enjoined, "not to harden their hearts nor shut their hands," but to lend him sufficient for his need. "Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, the seventh year, the year of release, is at hand; and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought, and he cry unto the Lord against thee, and it be a sin unto thee.

After seven sabbatical years was a more solemn sabbath called the year of Jubilee. "Then they were to cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month;" which was the beginning of their civil year. This was the solemn fast on which atonement was made for the sins of the people, and this solemn day was selected as the most suitable for a signal act of compassion and forgiveness. "On the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land, and ye shall hallow the 50th year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof. It shall be a jubilee unto you, and and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and every man unto his family. If thou sell aught unto thy neighbour, or buyest aught of thy neighbour's hand, ye shall not oppress one another. According to the number of years after the jubilee, thou shalt buy and sell." As in the Sabbatical year, all simple debts were cancelled to the poor, so in the year of jubilee, landed property as well as every other security was returned. "In all the land of your possession, there shall be a redemption of land. The land shall not be sold for ever; for the land is mine, saith the Lord, and ye are strangers and sojourners with me."

In case of debt a man might hire himself or be sold by his creditors for payment of his debt. This was preferred to the personal severities exercised over the unfortunate in ancient nations, and the rigorous and unproductive confinement among us. But his servitude was always terminated by the sabbatical year, and consequently could not last above six years. During that time he was not to be compelled to serve as a bondman; but as a hired servant and a sojourner. "For, saith the Lord, they are my servants, which I brought forth out of the land of Egypt. They shall not be sold for bondmen." The debtor might be *redeemed* at any time; but in the year of the sabbath and of the jubilee he was to be released without ransom: "and he shall depart, both he and his children with him, and shall return unto his own family, and unto the possession of his fathers shall he return: and when thou sendest him out free from thee, thou shalt not let him go away empty. Thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of

thy floor, and out of thy wine-press." What a beautiful and affecting spectacle, to see the prisoners and bandsmen returning, in little troops, to their homes and fire-sides, met and accompanied by their wives and children rejoicing in the recovery of their husbands and fathers, after such a long and afflicting absence; saluted and congratulated by their neighbours, relatives, and friends, all singing praises to Jehovah the God of Israel, who had redeemed them all from the house of bondage, established them in the promised land, and blessed them with these benign laws and ordinances.

Among the various modes of distress to which the poor have in all ages been subject, one of the most severe has been compulsion to serve in war. This is an unavoidable calamity, from which the wisest and most humane governments are not able to deliver their subjects. Even in Judea, personal service in defence of their country, was an universal duty; but the exemptions were framed with peculiar humanity and discretion. "The officers shall speak to the people, saying, what man is there that hath built a new house, and hath not dedicated it; let him return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man dedicate it. And what man is he that hath planted a vineyard and hath not eaten of it? let him also return to his house lest he die in the battle and another man eat of it. And what man is there that hath betrothed a wife and hath not taken her? let him return unto his house, lest he die in the battle and another take her. And what man is there that is fearful and faint-hearted? let him go and return unto his house, lest his brethren's heart faint as well as his heart."

Another injunction, calculated to mitigate the miseries of war, relates to the property of the enemy—"When thou shalt besiege a city a long time, thou shalt not destroy the trees thereof. Thou mayest eat of them; but thou shalt not cut them down to employ them in the siege, for the tree of the field is man's life."

Throughout the Mosaical code great pains are taken to keep alive a horror of shedding innocent blood. Capital punishments are denounced against man-slayers, and stealers of men; and if a man were found slain, the nearest town was to perform an expiatory sacrifice, and wash their hands over the victim, to put away the guilt of innocent blood from among them.

Casual homicide, however, was a misfortune to which every man was liable ; and in ancient times it was the most pregnant cause of personal quarrels, family feuds, and even wars between adjoining states. The right and obligation of the friends of the deceased to revenge his death, was never called in question ; and even in modern times it was the last trace of barbarism that remained, and it could hardly be obliterated by the most impartial protection of the innocent, and the most rigorous punishment of the guilty, that an enlightened jurisprudence could enforce. In fact, the custom of revenging personal and family quarrels survives even to the present day, and has long defied the power of the magistrate. In former ages the only remedies against this evil were voluntary exile and religious sanctuaries. But banishment and asylum were subject to this strong objection, that they equally protected the innocent and the guilty. Amid the confusion and bloodshed of those barbarous times, we cannot fail to be struck with the humanity and equity of the law of Moses. Of the cities appointed for the residence of the Levites, six were set apart to be cities of refuge, to which he who had accidentally committed manslaughter might flee, as a protection, not against the hand of justice, but against the private avenger of blood ; and that only while his heart was hot, and until the magistrate could take cognizance of the cause ; for if it was found that he had been guilty of murder, he was to be taken even from the altar that he might die. (Deut. xix. 4.)

Finally, the individuals of these federal tribes were kept in mind of their common origin, and common religion, by a solemn ordinance, that three times in every year they should appear at the temple in Jerusalem, to celebrate three festivals, in commemoration of their deliverance from Egypt, and the origin of their law. These and other ceremonies were also so regulated as to impress upon their minds the holy and humane precepts of their religion. (see Deut. xxvi.)

In general the more minute provisions of the law were all tinctured with humanity and justice : such as the injunctions to judges, the law of restitution, the number of witnesses, the severe punishment of false witnesses, and the mild restrictions as to corporal punish-

ment, expressly enjoined on this delicate principle of respect for our common nature: "lest, if he be beaten with many stripes, thy brother should seem vile unto thee." Besides these, there are many regulations as to inferior transgressions, and to honesty in their dealings, founded on the most humane and equitable principles of policy.

In conclusion, I think it may be said that, though ease and pleasure were not principal objects in settling the Israelites in the land of Canaan, it is not easy to devise a state of society more favourable to happiness. They were planted in a country requiring labour, but capable of rewarding industry. Their society was domestic, their government patriarchal, and their occupations rural. They were precluded from excessive wealth, and protected from extreme penury. As a man could not aggrandize his family, or endanger public freedom by extending his possessions and power, neither could he alienate his patrimony. As he could not oppress his neighbour by usury; so neither was he exposed to oppression, if he fell into decay. The law that discouraged loans, prevented men from running in debt; and the difficulty of borrowing guarded them against extravagance and profligacy. The periodical returns of the sabbatical years and the jubilee, settled all accounts, and brought back the debtor to his family and home, from exile, beggary, and bondage; and restored every thing to that happy and moderate state from which it had deviated. It was hardly worth while to err, when the error would be so soon corrected. The vicious man had scarcely time to complete his course of dissipation, or the extortioner to begin his system of extortion. When the usurer was so soon obliged to restore his gains, the extravagant could hardly expect a repetition of indulgence.

This people lived under a jurisprudence rigorous to flagitious vices, and inhuman crimes; but lenient to slighter offences. Their mutual intercourse must have been kind, when their treatment of the brutes was humane. The tenderness of their morality was set off by the sublimity and purity of their religion.

Such was the form of society, civil and religious, under which the Israelites were destined to become a holy and peculiar people, to wait for the approach of the Mes-

siah, to welcome him at his coming, to spread his doctrine through the world, and to be the basis of an Universal Church, of which he was to be the corner stone. A people (alas, how unworthy!) to "whom pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants; and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose were the Fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came."

ERASMUS.

EXTRACT,

FROM A TRACT ENTITLED, A REVIEW OF THE GENUINE
DOCTRINES OF CHRISTIANITY.

(Continued from page 156.)

In the account which St. Paul gives of himself to Felix the Roman governor, we find the following expressions: "After the way which they (the Jews) call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets. And have hope towards God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust: and herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence towards God, and towards men." Nor when Felix sent for Paul, "to hear him concerning the faith in Christ," is he represented as saying any thing about the favourite doctrines of some modern systems of divinity; but is described as reasoning of "righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come." And in St. Paul's speech for himself, before king Agrippa and Festus, after reciting the manner of his miraculous conversion, he gives this account of the method in which he first preached Christianity. "I was not," says the apostle, "disobedient unto the heavenly vision: but shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent, and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance." Indeed, any man who reads the acts of the apostles, with any degree of attention and impartiality, must be perfectly convinced, that the doctrines which they taught, and those which have been since taught by some who have affected to be

very close imitators of them, were totally different.— And the account which is given in the Acts, of the conversion of Cornelius, the Roman centurion, to the Christian faith, is a strong evidence of the regard that is ever paid to sincere piety and virtue by the Almighty ; and what little ground there is for the notion, that men cannot recommend themselves by their own actions to the favour of God. It is on the contrary plainly declared in this relation, that the PRAYERS and ALMS, the piety and benevolence, of a Roman officer, had so recommended him to the divine favour, that an angel was sent to him in order to occasion his conversion to Christianity. For the reason which the angel gave for his extraordinary appearance to him, was, “Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.” This eminent instance of the attention and regard of the Divine Being, to real piety and virtue, wherever found, so struck the apostle Peter, who had imbibed the narrow notions of his countrymen, that the favour of God was confined to their nation, that, “he opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive, that God is no respecter of persons : but in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.”

But it is from the epistles of St. Paul, as has been before observed, that some of the strongest proofs of the Calvinistical doctrines, and some others which have been founded upon them, are supposed to be drawn. It will not fall within the compass of this tract, to enter into a particular discussion of all the passages in St. Paul's epistles, which are urged in support of these opinions ; nor to give those more rational and consistent interpretations, which have been given by several excellent commentators of such passages. And indeed, a proper attention to those parts of scripture, the meaning of which is more obvious and less controverted, and to the general tenour of the sacred writings, would carry more conviction with it, than any examination of particular texts. For when once men have been accustomed to read any particular parts of scripture in a certain sense, and to annex a certain set of ideas to such and such phrases, though perhaps totally foreign from the original meaning of the writer, they naturally

consider every attempt to interpret any such passages, in a different sense from that in which they have been accustomed to understand them, as wresting and perverting them. But some general observations upon St. Paul's epistles, and some of the doctrines which are founded upon a misunderstanding of them, may not here be improper.

It should be remembered, in the perusal of these epistles, that they were written to particular churches, and persons, and on particular occasions ; and that they had an immediate reference, in many places, to some contentions and disputes which had arisen in the primitive churches, and some of which were peculiar to the first ages of Christianity. For without a proper attention to the particular view and design of the apostle in writing each epistle, it will often be impossible to form any clear notion of his meaning. These circumstances, together with that obscurity which naturally attends epistolary writings of a remote age, must, in the very nature of the thing, render St. Paul's epistles more difficult to be understood than many other parts of the sacred writings.

In the time of the Apostles it appears, that there were many Jews who had embraced Christianity, but who were, nevertheless, very much attached to the ceremonial law of Moses ; and who laboured to prove, that it was necessary for the Gentiles, and all the professors of Christianity, to conform to the Mosaic rites. St. Paul, in his epistles, opposes the notions of these judaizing Christians ; he teaches them that all who believed in Christ, and embraced his religion, would receive the free remission of their past sins, without any conformity to these ceremonial rites. But from these declarations of the apostle, that they were admitted into the Christian church, and had received the remission of their sins, by virtue of their faith in Christ, and without any respect either to their observance or non-observance of the law of Moses, the ceremonial part of which was entirely abolished by the Christian dispensation ; it has been inferred, that it was criminal for men to suppose that their own actions would contribute to, or be the occasion of, their final justification ; or that a conformity to the laws of religion and virtue, the practice even of real works of

righteousness, would be a means of their obtaining eternal happiness: though it is the clear and express language of St. Paul himself, as well as of the other sacred writers, that eternal life would be the reward of those, and of those only, who "by patient continuance in well-doing" sought "for glory, and honour, and immortality."

All the different texts in the epistles of St. Paul, which speak of faith as the cause of man's salvation, may be very rationally and consistently explained, and agreeably to the general tenor of the scriptures, without having recourse to those unreasonable interpretations which are frequently put upon them. And it may be proper to observe, that there was, in the very nature of the thing, a particular reason why faith should have been inculcated with peculiar force in the first ages of Christianity. It was certainly essentially necessary, that at that time faith should be established as a first principle. Those to whom the gospel was first preached, must have been previously convinced of the divine mission and authority of Christ, before they could be expected to obey his laws. But in later ages, and to those who already acknowledge the mission and authority of Christ, the *practice* of the duties of Christianity seems the principal thing to be inculcated. Though it must be acknowledged, that exhortations to faith may, notwithstanding, be very pertinent and advantageous to professed Christians: for it can scarcely be imagined, that so many professors of Christianity would be inattentive to the practice of its duties, if they were really and heartily convinced of the truth and importance of religion.

But there is another reason assigned in the New Testament, on which account men were required to believe, viz. that they might receive remission of sins. Men, in their present state, are surrounded with innumerable temptations, which render it morally impossible that they should be entirely free from sin; and the greatest part of mankind do, and in all ages of the world did, sin very frequently. "All have sinned," says St. Paul, "and come short of the glory of God." As all men, therefore, must have been conscious of having offended their Creator, in a greater or a less degree, and been therefore sensible, that they stood in need of mercy and forgive-

ness ; but could not have any certain assurance of their being in a state of favour and acceptance with him ; the Almighty thought proper to send Jesus Christ into the world, to die upon the cross, that all those who believed in him might receive remission of sins, and might consider his death as a proof of it. The death of Christ may therefore be considered as a memorial, and an evidence, to all mankind, of the placability of God. “ We were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.” It was by faith in the death of Christ, that God thought proper, for infinitely wise reasons, to dispense his mercy to mankind. But it is not, therefore, to be supposed, that the death of Christ was a *motive* to induce God to the exercise of mercy. The all-gracious Parent of mankind, essentially good and merciful in his own nature, needs no inducements to be merciful to his creatures. On the contrary, it is the language of scripture, that “ God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish.”

But it is certain, that it could not have been the doctrine of St. Paul, that faith in Christ would of itself entitle men to eternal salvation, without the practice of holiness ; because it is the plain and express language of St. Paul, and indeed of all the Scriptures, that “ without holiness no man shall see the Lord.” And it appears likewise equally clear, from St. Paul’s own epistles, that faith in Christ would not *necessarily* produce that holiness, which was indispensably necessary to the completion of their salvation ; and that the justification which he speaks of their receiving, by virtue of their faith in Christ, was not a final justification ; nor did it, in itself, give them a right to eternal life. This will appear very plainly, if we consider that those very persons whom he addresses as *called, enlightened, justified, reconciled to God, and saved* by faith in Christ, he frequently exhorts to a conformity to the commandments of Christ, and the laws of righteousness, assuring them that without this they would have no inheritance in the kingdom of God. “ Be ye therefore,” says the apostle, “ followers of God as dear children: for this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God ; let no man deceive you with vain

words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not deceived: God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap; but he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting." From all which it is evident, that when the apostle speaks of their being saved by faith in Christ, his meaning is not, that it entitled them to eternal happiness; but that they were thereby saved from the guilt of their past sins, and received into the favour of God, notwithstanding their former alienation from him; that, on their faith in Christ, they received from the free grace or mercy of God, the remission of their past sins, without their previously doing any thing to obtain such remission; and that, if they afterwards continued in a sincere endeavour to conform themselves to the laws of Christ, notwithstanding those imperfections which are always attendant on human obedience, they would finally be approved by him, and made partakers of that happiness which he has promised to all his true disciples. That St. Paul did not consider a real faith in Christ as necessarily in itself giving a right to eternal life, is very evident from his epistles; and it is observable, that speaking even of himself, (and of the reality and sincerity of his own faith he certainly could have no doubt) he says, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away;" in which the apostle manifestly speaks of his own salvation as *conditional*, and as depending on the discharge of his duty, and his adherence to the laws of virtue. "This single passage (says a noble and ingenious writer) is a full answer out of the mouth of St. Paul himself, to all the mistakes that have been made of his meaning, in some obscure expressions concerning grace, election, and justification." It may also be observed, that Christ himself speaks of persons who had such a degree of faith in him, as to enable them to prophesy, and work miracles in his name, and who, he declares, will nevertheless be in the number of those who would finally be rejected by him. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will

of my Father who is in Heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? and then will I profess unto them, I never knew ye: depart from me ye that work iniquity." We have also a text in the epistle to the Hebrews, which clearly supposes and expresses the possibility of men being finally condemned, notwithstanding their having a real faith, and being enlightened by the gospel, and even made partakers of the holy spirit. "It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the holy ghost, and have tasted of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come; if they shall fall away, to renew them again to repentance." And St. Paul, in the epistle to the Colossians, says, "You that were sometime alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to preserve you holy and unblameable, and unrepensible in his sight: if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel." Plainly teaching them that their reconciliation to God by faith in Christ, would not issue in their final salvation, unless they continued steadfast in their obedience to the laws of Christ; and that, notwithstanding their present reconciliation to God, by faith in Christ, their final salvation was *conditional*. It is not, however, to be supposed, that the professors of Christianity were to be entirely free from sin, in order to ensure their final salvation. Man is surrounded with such innumerable temptations, that some degree of moral imperfection is always attendant on humanity. And whilst we sincerely endeavour to do the will of God, our involuntary and unallowed imperfections will be forgiven by our merciful Creator. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." But we must endeavour, sincerely and uniformly, to obey the will of God; that must be the prevailing turn and bias of our minds; and without such a sincere conformity to the laws of our Creator, we have not the least reason to expect his final approbation, or to be made partakers of that felicity which he has promised to bestow upon the righteous.

The phrase, BEING SAVED BY FAITH, may be very rationally explained, even when it refers to man's final salvation; though the phrase is certainly frequently used in a different sense. For those who by a firm belief in the doctrines which Christ taught, of a future state of retribution, &c. are induced to refrain from, and to avoid the practice of vice, and to conform to, and regulate their lives by the laws of piety and virtue, may, with the strictest propriety of speech, be said to be SAVED BY FAITH. Because, though they are not saved on account of their faith; yet as their faith is the motive that induces them to regulate their lives by the rules of religion, they may very properly be said to be saved by faith.

It must be acknowledged, that those who adhere to the Calvinistical doctrines of justification, election, &c. do nevertheless admit the necessity of holiness, as supposing that faith will necessarily produce it. But it appears even from the New Testament, that men may really have faith who do not act in conformity to it; and, perhaps, observation on many characters in real life, would afford sufficient evidence of the *possibility* of it. And though these notions may be, and certainly frequently are, entertained by persons who are sincerely virtuous; yet, to teach men that they are incapable by their own natural powers, of so far conforming to the laws of righteousness, as to attain the favour of God, must naturally slacken their endeavours after it. And to teach them, that their own actions can in no degree recommend them to the divine favour, and that they are not to expect any reward hereafter, on account of anything which they themselves can do, is certainly depriving men of the strongest *motives* to a life of piety and virtue; and appears to be, in a very great degree, subverting the grand design of the Christian revelation.

But amongst all the absurd doctrines, which have been pretended to be founded on St. Paul's epistles, there does not appear to have been any so totally repugnant to every idea of the moral character of God, and against which every sentiment of humanity so strongly revolts, as that of predestination. St. Paul has shewn, that God has elected or chosen some particular nations, and collective bodies of men, to enjoy some eminent religious

advantages ; as the Jews, the Mosaic dispensation, and the Gentiles, the Christian ; which they were favoured with, not on account of their respective merits, but entirely because it was the will and pleasure of the Divine Being that it should be so ;* and which peculiar advantages he certainly might confer, consistently with the most perfect justice, on whatsoever nations, or bodies of people, his infinite wisdom should see fit. But from a total misunderstanding of the nature of the election, of which the apostle was speaking, he has been thought to mean, that God had arbitrarily elected a certain number of individuals to future happiness, to whom the means of salvation were given ; whilst the rest were reprobated, and consigned over to eternal misery. And all that is alleged in vindication of the moral character of the Deity, which so much suffers in this shocking representation of the divine conduct, is, that mankind incurred this sentence in consequence of Adam's transgression ; by which, he and all his posterity became objects of the divine wrath, and were subjected to everlasting misery ; though the scripture no where represents any thing but death being entailed on mankind, in consequence of the fall. Thus the whole human race are said to have been *justly* made subject to eternal misery, for an action committed many ages before the greater part of them existed ; though it is the uniform doctrine of the scriptures, that men are punished only for their own works. It is said to have been the doctrine of some of the predestinarian writers, that " God, of his own pleasure, antecedent to all sin in the creature, original or actual, did agree to glorify his sovereignty and justice, in the eternal rejection and damnation of the greatest part of mankind, as the end ; and in their unavoidable sin and impenitency, as the means."

Reason, revelation, and universal nature, proclaim this truth, that *God is good to all, and that his tender mercies are over all his works* ; but in what possible manner can we reconcile this with these doctrines ? with the supposition that he has devoted, by an irreversible decree, millions of his creatures to endless misery, without even having given them a possibility of avoiding it ?

*Vide Romans, chap. viii. ix. x. xi.

It is indeed amazing, that such a doctrine, so totally repugnant to every idea, not only of goodness and of mercy, but even of equity and of justice, should ever have been considered as a part of that divine religion, which the Father of mercies, the God of love, has instituted as his last and most merciful dispensation to the sons of men.

Notwithstanding the absurd and erroneous interpretations, which have been given of some parts of St. Paul's writings, they are in themselves perfectly rational and consistent, and entirely agreeable to the doctrine of Christ and the other apostles. It is only when some particular detached passages of his epistles, are interpreted without a proper regard to the peculiar circumstances which attend his writing them, and to the whole scope of his reasoning, that he appears to differ from them. This apostle, in all his epistles, inculcates the uniform practice of virtue with great force and energy. And the account which he gives of the future judgment, perfectly agrees with that given in the gospels. "The judgment of God is according to truth;—who will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life: but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation, and wrath; tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil;—but glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good; for there is no respect of persons with God."*

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Thus it appears to be the design of the New Testament, throughout every part of it, to excite men to the uniform practice of piety and virtue. It appears, that "the grace of God," which "hath appeared unto all men" in the gospel dispensation, was intended to teach them, that "denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts, they should live soberly, righteously, and piously in the present world."† In which it perfectly coincides with those innumerable exhortations to the practice of righteousness which occur in the Old Testament.

* Romans, ii, 2—11.

† Titus ii. 11, 12.

And to this the doctrine of a future state of retribution is strongly pressed and inculcated as the principal motive. Other motives are occasionally spoken of, but this appears to be the great leading principle of the Christian revelation. The notions entertained by the heathens of a future state, appear to have been attended with much doubt and uncertainty: some of them appear to have considered it only as a poetic fiction; and some of their best writers, in speaking of it, do it in a manner that shews they rather *wished* for it, than really expected or believed it: and even the Jews themselves appear to have been much in the dark concerning it. It is only by the gospel, that *life and immortality* have been clearly *brought to light*,* and the doctrine of a future state of retribution plainly revealed. And it certainly is a motive, that, of all others, may rationally be supposed to act the most forcibly upon mankind. For surrounded as man is, in his present state, with innumerable temptations, tending to withdraw him from an adherence to his duty, perhaps there is no other that can, through the general tenour of life, be supposed to actuate him with sufficient force.

COMMENTARY ON JOHN, i. 1.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

TRINITARIANS have uniformly rested upon this text as their principal prop and stay. To the superficial reader, it appears at first sight rather mystical and difficult of explanation; and on its very ambiguity they found, as they conceive, an incontrovertible proof of the equality of Christ with the Father. The principal difficulty arises from the precise meaning which we should attach to what is here styled the “Word.” Whether we should view it as referring immediately to Jesus Christ, or to the *Divine Wisdom*, as in Proverbs, viii. 22, 23, “The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old, &c.” And at the 30th verse, “Then I was *by him*, as one brought up *with him*; I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him.”

There is evidently a striking parallel between this passage and that which is the subject of our present comment. One thing is certain however, that in whatever light we construe it, it is not and cannot be a proof even by inference, much less a direct proof, of the equality and co-existence of Christ with God. Granting that the "Word here spoken of meant Christ, we cannot suppose that the Evangelist John intended to teach any thing respecting the person and office of Christ, contrary to the spirit and teaching of the other Evangelists and Apostles, or that he who was uniformly represented and known by the character and appellation of the "Son of God," was, or could be God himself. We cannot suppose that the chosen disciple of our Lord was so ignorant of the ordinary signification of language, and the common ideas of mankind, as to have us to understand that what he called the "Word" could be "*with*" the eternal God, and the very eternal God at the same time ; or in other words, that he was the same identical Person or Being in whose presence he was, and to whom he is represented as *belonging*—as in 1 Cor. iii. 23, "And ye are Christ, and *Christ is God's*." The phrase "*with*" conveys to our mind at once the idea of two distinct and separate objects, and of the *relative position* of those objects in regard to each other. That which is *with* another, cannot be the same being or person *with whom it is*. They must, from the very nature of things, be *different*, both in point of *situation*, and in point of *existence*. There must be betwixt them some positive mark of distinction, either *derived* or *inherent*. We must therefore suppose the Evangelist to have been a very bad logician, according to the Trinitarian view of the text, if he meant to affirm, that the *Word was God*, and that the word was *with God*, in the *full* and *literal* sense of the term, at the same time. He seems, however, to have properly observed this distinction, and to have purposely repeated it lest we should misunderstand his meaning. Had he stopped short after telling us, that the "Word was God," we might have been led, though contrary to our reason and the whole strain of Scripture, to attach a shade of plausibility to the Trinitarian interpretation ; but he repeats—"the same was in the beginning *with* God," as if to put us on our guard, lest we

should be led by the previous affirmation that the "word was God," to deduce the equality and identity of Christ with the Father.

Again, we would ask Trinitarians what they understand by the words "*in the beginning?*" To us it appears that the "*beginning*" means some *definite* point of time. "*In the beginning* God created the Heavens and the earth." Even Trinitarians will not be disposed to question, that God must have existed *before that beginning*—that he existed from all eternity. But the "Word" spoken of is represented as having *a beginning*. Christ is also called the "first-born of every creature;" "the beginning of the creation of God,"—"the begotten:" consequently there must have been a time, at *which he did not exist*, a period when he *derived* his existence from the incomprehensibility and perfection of the Father. In whatever light, then, we view the "Word" or Christ as called God, it can only be in a subordinate sense. He cannot have been the eternal self-existent God, as eternity excludes all idea of a *beginning*. Thus it is that Trinitarians, by making Christ equal with God, hesitate not to circumscribe the existence of Jehovah himself, and to cancel one of his divine attributes!

The Evangelist in this chapter is speaking of the doctrine and ministry of Christ, and the reception they met with among mankind. Christ is very appropriately styled the "word," as being the messenger of the word or will of God to men, in the same manner as he is denominated the "power" of God, and the "wisdom" of God; God's power and wisdom being manifested in him. When John says, then, that the "word was God," he does not give us to understand that the divine word which was revealed, or that Christ the communicator of that word was the same as the Supreme God from whom he derived his knowledge, and by whom the doctrines which he taught were delivered unto him; but that Christ "being in the bosom of the Father," that is, being in intimate communion with him and fully instructed in his counsels, was qualified to be such a true and faithful interpreter of the revealed will of God, that what he spoke might be said to be the word of God himself. Thus by a strong figure the inspired writer goes so far as to say that the "word was God."

At the 14th ver. of this chapter, we find it stated, that “the *word was made* flesh and dwelt among us.” Being “*made*” demonstrates that he was “*even during his pre-existent state*” subject to the control of a higher power. He did not originate of himself—he did not *become* flesh; *he was made*. “*And dwelt* among us—” God does not merely *dwelt* or *sojourn*, he is always present. “And we beheld his glory, the glory as of *the only begotten* of the Father, full of grace and truth.” These words prove to a demonstration, that there was a time when he derived not only his divinity but his being from the Father; which considerations might be sufficient to convince any except those whose minds are incarcerated under the trammels of a creed or a system, that the “word” could not have been the eternal self-existent God,—that Christ is not equal with the Father.

J. C.

THE LORD'S DAY.

IN absolute time there are neither days nor weeks. Relative time is measured by the sun. The intervals of Creation, therefore, prior to the appearance of the sun, are called days by Moses only by anticipation, or prophetically, as a grammarian would say. No man, therefore, can tell on what day of the week the creation began, or was completed. The Jews fixed upon Saturday for their Sabbath, supposing it to be the day on which God ceased from his work. The Christians chose Sunday as the day of rest, in commemoration of the resurrection; and the Mahomedans, I believe, prefer Thursday. All, however, deem it to be the will of God that one day in seven should be set apart for religion and repose. This is the main point: the disputes about the particular day are equally frivolous and futile. The nature of this institution evidently requires the concurrence of the whole community; and this agreement can be produced only by mutual consent or the authority of law. Happily for these countries this appointment is sanctioned by both. The custom has prevailed from time immemorial, and is coeval with civilized society; and it has been established by law from a remote antiquity and with general consent. In this last respect it enjoys an advantage above most of our other laws.

The right of the legislature to interfere with matters of religion gives rise to a question of great delicacy and importance; but in this view of the subject it cannot be said to interfere with any scruple of conscience. The magistrate is surely competent to demand respect for an ancient and sacred custom, in which the whole nation has cheerfully concurred, and which is now become the common law of the land. He may, therefore, require a suspension of the operations of commerce and trade, and of all public sports and amusements. He is not entitled to pry into the conduct of private families, or to enquire how they occupy their time: neither is he authorized to enforce an attendance on public worship, much less upon any prescribed form; but it is no encroachment upon civil or religious liberty to require a compliance with such innocent and orderly regulations, as conduce to decency and good order. In general it is his duty to countenance and protect from annoyance those who comply with the law, and to discountenance and restrain those who treat it with contempt.

In the observance of the Christian Sabbath various customs prevail in different countries. Even in Protestant states great indulgence is allowed. With these I have no concern at present, but confine myself to these nations. Among ourselves, also, a great variety of opinion and practice exists. The Roman Catholic inhabitants generally make use of the license permitted by their religion in foreign parts; while among Protestants there is a growing propensity to revive the puritanical rigour of former times. Between these extremes there are various degrees of strictness and relaxation, often chargeable with laxity and indifference. We should be equally on our guard against irreligious dissipation, frigid formality, and Pharisaical hypocrisy. The rigorous observance of the Lord's day is fostered by the habitual use of the word Sabbath, which is never employed in that sense in Scripture, and savours too much of that Judaizing spirit which gave the Apostles so much trouble. The Lord's day was celebrated among the earlier Christians as a day of rejoicing, for which reason they esteemed it a sin either to fast or kneel.* Those who choose to

* King's Primitive Church, part 2nd. chap. vii. sec. 8. &c. Ignatius, Barnabas, Justin Martyr, &c., apud King's Primitive Church, part 2nd, chap. vii. sect. 8.

convert the Lord's day into a Jewish Sabbath, should at least abstain from uncharitable reflections on those who exercise their Christian liberty, and from any vexatious interference with the innocent and inoffensive recreations of the lower orders.

Having thus premised these few remarks on the right and duty of the magistrate to regulate the observance of the Lord's day, I shall now suggest a few reflections on its importance and the manner in which it should be observed. Its importance to every class of society might be easily shown, but I shall confine myself to two, in one or both of which all men are included, namely, superiors and inferiors.

Considered as a superior, a man is either exercising authority or indulging in pleasure. He is in one of those situations which are best calculated to encourage insolence and wantonness, best fitted to stifle reflexion and to excite a distaste for a sober and thoughtful retirement, and which nevertheless above all others demand it, as the only preservative against vice, and affording the only chance of substantial happiness. Without this, how soon will authority degenerate into oppression, peevishness and pride;—how soon will his love for pleasure corrupt the purest and noblest feelings of his heart, and substitute brutal and disgusting excesses for the sublime pleasures of which his rational nature is susceptible! How soon will he learn to abuse to the oppression of his fellow men those superior advantages which were conferred on him for their benefit! In no situation is it more necessary for man occasionally to halt in the career of life, to check that impetuosity, which would otherwise communicate an irresistible and destructive momentum to his passions: to suspend his ignoble pursuits: to call up and dwell upon ideas of a different class, and to reflect, that if he be a superior, he is also an inferior; if he be raised above want or calamity, it is by a superior power, on which he is absolutely dependent, and that he may suffer misery as severely as he can inflict it.

If man be considered in a subordinate situation, the advantage to be derived from stated periods of rest and reflexion is yet more obvious. If those who have the direction of his time and labour, be not subject to some

superior authority, and obliged to grant him some respite from toil, he will be speedily reduced to the condition of a beast of burden; as in spite even of a divine ordinance too many of our species actually are. Were his master under no necessity to release him from his labor, and had the wretched slave neither time nor opportunity for repose, what a miserable animal would he soon become! and had he no stated calls to attend devotional exercises, to moral instruction, or the consideration of any subject but his daily labour, what a degradation of human nature would soon take place! The sabbath is the peculiar portion of the poor; their only time for liberty, domestic enjoyment, and spiritual edification. The disposal of it for these purposes is their privilege and their duty. It preserves them from utter degradation; and places them on a level in the most important view with Princes and Kings. The advantage and necessity of such an appointment becomes still more apparent, when we consider man as a religious and moral creature; connected by certain ties and duties, not only with his brethren of mankind, but with an infinite, invisible spirit, the creator and preserver of himself, and every thing that exists. To the attainment of just ideas on these subjects, and the cultivation of suitable affections, certain periods of thought and certain modes of instruction are indispensably requisite. Let any one who has been conversant with populous towns or great cities, and has observed the manner in which the great majority of the inhabitants spend their time, ask himself whether every trace of the moral and religious character of man would not soon be obliterated, were such appointments superseded. Let us suppose the inhabitants even of the country never to be called into society, exhorted to moral conduct, reminded of devotional duties, by the return of the Lord's day, and how soon would they sink into a state of the most contemptible torpor, ignorance, and barbarism!

Lastly, how could men be qualified for immortality and for that pure state of society, which must prevail in a spiritual life, if they were not at stated periods called out of the bustle of the world, obliged to reflect, and solicited to hear instruction!

The connexion of our happiness with the exercise of our intellectual faculties, and our moral and devotional affections, is so evident, that the institution which contributes so much to the excellence of our nature must necessarily redound to our felicity.

Now, how is this leisure to be procured? How are these habits of reflection to be formed? How those opportunities of instruction obtained? To expect that each individual man, engaged in the hurry of commerce, the intrigues of ambition or the intoxication of pleasure, should set apart certain portions of time for cultivating principles inconsistent, perhaps, with his favourite pursuits, for self-examination, reprehension, and condemnation, and for improvement in those principles of moral and religious knowledge, which would make him blush for the degenerate or guilty manner in which he spent his life, is evidently most preposterous and absurd. Nothing can be more inconsistent with any knowledge of mankind than such an imagination. Who could admit such a whimsical notion, as that the merchant, the politician, the man of pleasure, should interrupt and suspend their respective occupations, and give their competitors the start in the race of life, that *they* might study religion? or that, if they were so disposed, they should be able to prosecute such reflections to any advantage without instruction or assistance? How many neglect these duties, as it is!

How then is this leisure to be obtained, and this assistance to be procured? Only by a sacred and authoritative ordinance, which shall set all men on a level in respect to worldly interest, put an entire stop to the business and the pleasures of the world, put it out of men's power to continue their usual avocations, oblige men to attend to moral and spiritual concerns, or to nothing, and open public assemblies where instruction and admonition shall be provided; to which the meanest shall have access, in which the ignorant shall meet with instruction, the insolent with reproof, the flagitious with reprehension, the most miserable with consolation, and the upright and pious with assistance and encouragement. Accordingly, to show the importance of this institution in the view of infinite wisdom, the observance of one day in seven was established as an univer-

sal law at the creation ; renewed to the peculiar people of God at the giving of the law ; and again established in that church which is open to the whole human race.

How should these intervals of rest, which are equally necessary for the restoration of the body and the edification of the soul, equally conducive to happiness and improvement, be occupied ? Not surely in sleep, for to this the season of night is appropriated, and from this the mind could derive no advantage ; nor in bodily exercise, for the ordinary occupations of life provide this even to excess ; nor in private meditation and solitary study, for of these few are capable, fewer furnished with the necessary means of knowledge, and scarcely any disposed to investigate, chastise, and correct their own vices ; not in solitary worship alone, for neither is this adapted to the capabilities and inclinations of mankind. Certainly in social meetings for the improvement of the understanding and the heart by stated instruction, suited to the circumstances of the people, and public worship, by which men's minds will acquire a habit and a faculty of reflecting on their relation to God and to man.

How would it have delighted Socrates or Plato to witness a Christian Sabbath ! to see the high and the low, the rich and the poor meeting together to be reminded of their reciprocal duties, and their relation to God the maker of them all—to hear more sublime and spiritual truths than they were able to conceive, made familiar to the meanest of the people ; and to behold such an assembly uniting in joint supplications and thanksgivings to the Supreme Being under the endearing title of their common father who is in heaven !—With what transport would they contemplate the whole world checked in its career of folly and vice, and the gay, the dissolute, the worldly-minded and the proud flocking, in company with the poor and lowly, to hear such principles and join in such exercises, as they were obliged to confine to an academy, a portico, or a Lyceum ! How would they admire the benignity of an institution, which released the slave from the dominion of his master, and even provided for the ease and comfort of the beasts of the field ? “On the seventh day thou shalt rest, that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid and the stranger may be refreshed.”

The beauty of the Christian Sabbath appears with peculiar advantage when we visit a rural district in a religious country. The morning opens with a solemn universal silence; nothing to be heard but the singing or twittering of a bird on a neighbouring tree. Even the dogs, hearing no stranger's foot or voice, are silent. As the day advances, we see the people issuing from their cottages, winding down the hills, emerging from the hollows, and traversing the plain, till they meet all in their best attire, in friendly groups upon the high road. We then see them advancing in a Sabbath day's pace, towards their respective places of worship. Again, on their return, the way is covered with a denser crowd, till they gradually fall off by different roads or by their well known stiles and footpaths to their homes, to assemble round the domestic board. They then enjoy their leisure and freedom from care and toil, walking in the fields or resting on a sunny bank, till they again meet at their evening repast. We then may hear in our walks the Bible read in solemn tone, the Psalms sung with holy zeal, and the duties of the day concluded by prayer. This is a true picture of the Lord's day, as observed in our neighbouring counties. How different is this from the noise and confusion that prevail in populous cities! What grating sounds and nauseous sights, what profaneness and intoxication offend and distract the pious mind! Compare the picture I have drawn, with the foot-ball playing and hurling matches, and their natural concomitants and consequences, which profane the holy day in other parts of our island.

Such is the Christian Sabbath or Lord's Day, an institution worthy of God and necessary to man, calculated to promote the temporal felicity, spiritual edification, and future exaltation of the human race. The original appointment of the Jewish Sabbath required a rigorous abstinence from every kind of business and amusement, with a severity that ran through the whole of the Mosaical law, and with a degree of minute precision, which was necessary in those times and for that people.

Our gracious Lord, who was sent to enlarge and refine the principles of the former revelation, has not in-

sisted on such a punctilious observance of the seventh day, as was necessary at first, in order to separate it from ordinary days, and to obtain for it an establishment in the world. He rebuked those Pharisaical hypocrites, who had strained the divine commandment beyond its original intention ; he vindicated the superiority of piety and virtue above ceremonial observances ; asserted this to have been the spirit of the Jewish religion ; and declared that the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. Man was not created merely for the performance of religious rites ;—but the ordinances of religion, and particularly the Sabbath, were instituted for the edification, consolation, and felicity of man. Conformably to this rational and liberal maxim is the institution of the Lord's day to be interpreted. We are not to spend it in a slavish round of superstitious austerities ; but we are to rescue it from the world, and devote it to moral and religious exercises. As six successive days are spent in providing for the necessities of the body, so the seventh is to be appropriated, in at least an equal degree, to the supply of our spiritual wants ; as, during the week, we provide such a competence of worldly goods, as may enable us to rest on the Sabbath, and spend the Lord's Day in religious occupations, so on that day we should lay in such a store of moral and religious principles and sentiments, as may regulate our conduct during the week—justly jealous of the encroachment of the world, we should draw a clear and distinct line of separation between the days of business and the day of devotion. There is so little danger of our growing too strict in the observance of the Lord's day, and so much of becoming too lax, that we should be suspicious of any intrusion upon the sacred retirement of that holy day. We may, nay we must, perform such business, as is necessary for our subsistence, and for external decency ; but we should be cautious of construing works of necessity with too great a latitude : we may, nay we ought to interrupt its sacred rest by works of mercy ; because, mercy is more acceptable to God than sacrifices and whole burned offerings ; but we are carefully to abstain from such sensual indulgences, and such vain and frivolous amusements as tend to divert our thoughts from sober and

salutary meditation. And though some may not be able to maintain such a command over their thoughts, as the nature of the institution seems to require, and may occasionally be tempted to indulge in some degree of dissipation, there is one part of its duties, which every one has it in his power to perform, and the performance of which, will most strongly recommend an attention to the rest, or compensate for the occasional neglect of them, I mean an attendance on the public offices of instruction and worship. This alone will have a powerful efficacy in keeping up our acquaintance with God and godliness—when this is neglected, there is little hope of any moral or religious proficiency, but every reason to fear the growth of a sordid and mercenary, a dissipated and licentious, or of a frivolous and trifling temper of mind.

Lastly, it often happens that serious people are debarred by sickness, accident, or local situation, from frequenting places of public worship; but as this is no bar to the observance of the Christian Sabbath, so it is no excuse for the neglect of it. In the present state of religious literature, no person can be at a loss for materials and helps to secret or domestic worship and instruction. The Lord's day is calculated for the private dwelling and the sick chamber as well as for the church of God, and may in such cases be observed in the one as well as the other. The pious meditations of Isaac, walking in the field in the even tide; and the worship of his son Jacob, leaning on the top of his staff, were acceptable to the Most High. It is to be remembered that though the Jews observed the Sabbath so strictly, they had no place of public worship out of Jerusalem, till synagogues were opened after the captivity; and that at different times they spent several generations in Heathenish countries, and in a state of servitude and contempt; yet they always exhibited an exemplary strictness in the duties of religion, even while they wept by the rivers of Babylon, and hung their harps on the willows; or were thrust into the den of lions, and the fiery furnace. Though God is said to love the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob, yet he heareth in secret, and hath made the Sabbath for the benefit of man in the closet as well as the temple.

NEMO.

ISAIAH, ix. CHAP. 6 VERSE.

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulders; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.”

The above Text is considered one of the strongest proofs of the Supreme Deity of Christ; though it *primarily* referred to Hezekiah the son of Ahaz, king of Judah.

Rezin, king of Syria, and Pekah king of Israel, having combined against the king of Judah, on Ahaz's rejecting the offer of any sign of his own choosing, out of the whole compass of nature, the Lord gave a sign of his own, that a virgin should bring forth a wonderful son. In the 7th chapter of Isaiah, we have the first mention of the child born of a daughter of Judah, then a virgin. The word virgin does not always signify an unmarried woman, for we hear of a virgin betrothed as well as a virgin unbetrothed, and in Joel 1st and 8th, “Lament, like a virgin, girded with sackcloth for the *husband* of her youth.” Virgin is also used to signify a city, nation, or people! Thus we frequently hear of “the virgin, the daughter of Babylon; the virgin, the daughter of Zion, of Israel, &c. i. e. the land or people of Babylon, Zion, and Israel. The steady adherents to Christ also, whether in the wilderness, secluded from the world, or mixing with it, are called virgins, because untainted with the world. The common translation is, “Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign. Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good.” This translation imports that the child's eating honey and butter was requisite to his knowing good from evil, which would be absurd.

Bishop Louth, in accordance with Harmer's observations, by giving another sense to a Hebrew particle, translates this whole difficult passage thus: “Behold this virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and thou shalt call his name Immanuel. Butter and honey (two great luxuries in the East,) shall he eat, when he shall know to refuse evil, and choose good, and the land by whose two kings thou art distressed, shall be desolate.”

And this desolation of the destroyers, will give butter and honey, i. e. peace and plenty, to desolated Judah, before the child shall have reached the years of mature discrimination between right and wrong, that is, in a few years. I am aware of the double fulfilment of prophecy, first in a temporal, and afterwards in a spiritual sense. Thus Isaiah, in the 11th chapter, connects the Messiah's kingdom with the destruction of Senacherib, in the 10th. In like manner he connects the deliverance of Judah from the two firebrand kings, during Hezekiah's youth, in the 7th chap. with the great spiritual deliverance by Christ, in the beginning of the 9th chapter. But the co-incidence is far from being complete in point of time, in the *primary* temporal sense, however it may be in the *secondary* spiritual sense, as the latter was to occur in a few years, and the former in 700 years after the prophecy was made. And as to the similarity of the name of Immanuel, both in the primary and secondary senses, El or God is a very common adjunct to Hebrew proper names, and certainly attaches not divinity to the persons so called, any more than Lemuel does—the latter being God 'with *them*,' and the former God 'with *us*.' But what says the Septuagint?

"For unto us a child has been born, to us a son has been given, and the sceptre or ensign of authority has been upon his shoulders, and his name *is*, or *shall be* called, (not Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace but,) THE ANGEL OF THE MIGHTY COUNCIL, for I will bring peace to the rulers, and soundness to himself." This is all we find in the Septuagint. Is not this astonishingly different from our translation? Not a word of Wonderful, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, but simply the Angel of the great Council, or Counsel. That the Everlasting Father should be a Son, that the mighty God should be born, that the all-wise Supreme should come to refuse the evil and choose the good, as if the unchangeable did not always do so, seem to me such astounding contradictions as incline me to think the common translation incorrect.

I shall be much gratified by seeing a little more light thrown upon the subject of this short essay.

SACRED POETRY.

The following beautiful little pieces were written by two young ladies—one of whom has occasionally suffered from ill health. They were never intended to meet the public eye; and we have had considerable difficulty in obtaining permission to send them into the world. We have the greater pleasure in the success of our request, because the spirit of resignation and piety which they breathe must be gratifying to our readers, whilst it refutes the charge of coldness and indifference so generally preferred against Unitarians. We freely confess, that the plain and rational doctrines of the Gospel are little calculated to produce a boastful and obtrusive enthusiasm; but, we know, that they are eminently adapted to awaken a calm and abiding piety, resulting in the peaceful and unassuming discharge of the various duties of life. The female breast is the sanctuary of devotion; and we need not be surprised that an amiable sentiment should frequently be carried to an extreme in sensitive natures: yet, we cannot fail to rejoice when we behold the warm feelings of the heart tempered by the sound convictions of the head, and the operations of a rational faith equally manifested by cheerfulness and virtue.

EDITORS.

MATTHEW, XXVI, 41.

"The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

He who those patient words expressed,
Was grieved in spirit and oppressed;
His sorrow they might well partake,
To whom in meekness thus he spake.

And can they not *one* hour attend
Their faithful and beloved friend?
He bids them watch—and do they sleep
Whilst he endures such anguish deep?

Yet from his lips what kindness flows,
As he excuses their repose;
Divine in thought, in word, and deed,
He never breaks the bruised reed.

Oh! may his spirit make our peace,
May each unsocial passion cease,
His mild and heavenly precepts guide,
To check the risings of our pride.

A. B.

JOHN, XIV. 1.

“ Let not your heart be troubled.”

Let not your heart be troubled—pilgrim, hear
 The Saviour's words, your thorny path to cheer.
 Let not your heart be troubled—words of peace;
 Now may the throb of deep-drawn sorrow cease
 Let not your heart be troubled—God is love,
 Inviting you to seek your home above.
 Let not your heart be troubled—Jesus came
 To offer peace and pardon in his name.

Why are we troubled? 'Tis because we live
 Too much in hope of what the world can give.
 Why are we troubled?—We are every day
 Too much in dread of what it takes away.
 Shall we be troubled, tho' the world may frown,
 We, who should covet an *immortal crown*?
 Shall we be troubled tho' in pain or grief?
 The Saviour's words supply a sweet relief.
 We will no more be troubled, nor oppressed;
 Safe in his promises of peace we rest,
 That in his Father's mansion we shall dwell;
 He will prepare a place—and all is well!

A. B.

PRAYER.

Lord, when the morning beams arise,
 Teach our dull hearts to mount the skies,
 Rest to our bodies thou hast given,
 Grant to our souls the peace of heaven;
 And as the flower is fed by dew,
 So let thy grace our hearts renew.

When day proceeds in fuller glow,
 Thyself, great God! more brightly shew;
 Thy servants save from every snare,
 And let thy love our memory share;
 Bid us behold the Lamb of God,
 Who through this world unerring trod!

When evening shadows close around,
 Lord, may our hearts with thee be found;
 Recal our souls, subdue our will,
 And teach the passions to be still.
 More fit for heaven each day to grow,
 Thy grace we ask—that grace bestow.

M. B.

CANT AND CRIME.

SOME persons may be surprised to see the words placed at the head of this article set in juxtaposition: yet, there are no two words in the English language, which, in reality, have a more natural association. Whilst true religion, proceeding from sound views of Gospel doctrines, equally influences the head and the heart, and manifests its sacred efficacy in unaffected piety and pure morality, the counterfeit religion of the lips, of parade and exhibition, as naturally results in hollow profession and secret crime. Such consequences might reasonably be expected. Where the sterling coin is intrinsically valuable, and held in general estimation, the temptation to pass counterfeits on the world is proportionably increased. The external glitter of the cheat costs little, and is even more brilliant than the lustre of the genuine coin; so that the confiding and unwary are easily duped, and the success of imposture augments the number of the practitioners of deceit.

The accuracy of this statement is amply attested by the history of all ages and all churches. The devotees of Heathenism sacrificed to their Gods and floundered in sensuality: the Jews scrupulously attended to all the ritual observances of the ceremonial law, whilst they neglected judgment, mercy, truth, and the love of God, "sounding trumpets before them in the streets, making long prayers for a pretence, and devouring widows' houses:" the Roman Catholics following in their steps, degraded Christianity into a system of irrational dogmas and ridiculous exhibitions, whilst they sinned and confessed, received absolution, and returned to "wallowing in the mire" of iniquity; and in our own days, the leading sects of Protestants have commenced a rivalry of profession, unequalled by the "hypocrisies" of Judaism, and the follies of Catholicity. I do not speak of the wild fanaticism and outrageous blasphemy of the Irvingites and others of the same description: I refer to what is passing in the very bosom of our regular Protestant churches and communities. The trumpets are sounded, the crowds are congregated, the long and loud prayers are uttered, extraordinary times and places

are devoted to exhibitions of zeal, faith is lauded as the sole instrument of salvation, virtue is sneered at as "heathen morality," and the whole of religion reduced to the profession of certain dogmas, and living in the mystical whirl and excitement of noisy preachings, and prayer-meetings, and evangelical visitings, and public spectacles?

No man in the least degree acquainted with human nature, or the history of the world, can be surprised at the notorious fact, that just as these revolting follies and vain exhibitions have advanced, public morals have become deteriorated, and the spirit of Christianity has declined. It is admitted on all hands, and the public records attest the alarming truth, that crime is accumulating in these countries with a fearful rapidity; and the deplorable condition of our own wretched country, which has become a *Golgotha* from north to south, too fully proves that the cant of sects has banished the spirit of the Gospel.

I might well restrict our view and come to the very town in which we live. Let any of the older inhabitants compare its present condition with that in which it stood, twenty or thirty years ago. *Then* all was harmony and good will: the ministers and people of all denominations mingled in the ordinary intercourse of social life, and in the support of public institutions, with sentiments of mutual forbearance, charity, and esteem; no man's creed raised him to unmerited public honour, or deprived him of deserved public approbation. How humbling is the contrast of the present day! With a few honourable exceptions, the very clergy of the different sects, who ought to be examples to their flocks, hold no social intercourse or friendly communion: nay, several of them, former associates and friends, even meet upon the streets, without the slightest recognition, if not with the scowl of hatred and contempt. The same spirit of gall and bitterness has been, unhappily, too generally diffused through all the veins of society. Friends are alienated; the socialities and courtesies of life are interrupted; plans of public improvement are impeded; children are separated in education; the neutral ground of public charity upon which all parties once delighted to assemble, has been broken up and divided into paltry sectarian inclo-

tures ; co-operation has been refused, even for the emancipation and moral regeneration of the negro, except upon principles of sectarian exclusion ; and political rancour, assuming the garb of religion, has poured additional ingredients of bitterness into the ever-bubbling cauldron of enmity and strife ! Have I overcoloured the picture ? Every one knows, that I have fallen far short of depicting the vivid colours of the real scene—a scene which has its living counterpart, in almost every town and district of the empire.

Is it religion, the religion of the *Gospel*, that has thus converted a comparative Eden into a “waste and howling wilderness”—that has envenomed the heart of man against his brother, and annihilated even the benevolent sympathies of nature ? No : it is the counterfeit religion of the world—the religion of sects and parties—the religion of dominant churches—the religion of interest and ambition ! Christianity utterly disowns it, and feels herself dishonoured by its assumption of her blessed and benevolent name.

And need we wonder, that under the influence of such a system, morality should wither and decline ? When it is constantly impressed upon the minds of the multitude, that *opinion* is every thing, and *practice* nothing ; that the most atrocious criminal with a right faith is sure of Heaven, whilst the holiest of men with an erroneous creed is only secure of hell : when the profession of certain tenets leads to honour, emolument, and worldly applause, whilst without such profession, the greatest integrity and purity are subject to injury and contempt—when such things are, no one can be surprised, that many well-disposed, though misguided individuals, should readily adopt a system so soothing to their indolence, so flattering to their vanity, and so congenial with their hopes ; or that thousands of knaves and hypocrites should take advantage of the popular mania to advance their own selfish or malevolent designs, by a profession at which they secretly laugh, and arts which they cannot fail to despise !

To say that all men are immoral who make a zealous profession of religion, and who entertain certain views of Christianity, would be equally uncharitable and untrue. Many sincere and excellent men and women,

exemplary in all the relations of life, are to be found amongst such professors; but, it is equally true, that multitudes of deluded victims and odious hypocrites are also to be found—the former sinning, on the conviction that mere breaches of the moral law will be followed by no penalty, and the latter professing what they do not believe, for the sake of fashion, popularity, or gain.

Nothing can be more astounding or destructive, than the encouragement given to crime, (unwittingly I admit,) by our peculiar and exclusive professors of Orthodoxy. On reading the records of prisons, any one would imagine, who had never read the Bible, that the commission of murder was “the narrow way” to salvation, and that the gallows was the portal of heaven! When the most infamous ruffians have coolly and deliberately imbrued their hands in human blood to satiate the infernal thirst of gain, or lust, or revenge, ministers of the gospel, and females calling themselves *evangelical*, prevail upon the convicted villains to express their belief in certain tenets of speculative theology, and then assure them, that though reeking with the blood of murdered innocence, they are now fitted for the presence and approbation of God! *Burke*, the human butcher, died, confident of going to heaven, “through the atoning blood of Jesus.” *Corder*, the seducer and murderer of confiding innocence, passed from the scaffold “into glory.” *Cooke*, who destroyed, chopped up, and burned his creditor, became “a sweet saint and most interesting youth, a brand plucked from the burning,” according to the published statements of certain young and fashionable females: and the hardened, atrocious parricide, as despicable in his new-sprung, hypocritical saintship, as hateful in his long career of infamy, has been known to become, at once, the favoured object of interest to those who would denounce the best man in society as doomed to eternal perdition, for an alleged error of faith!

We need not, then, wonder at the progress of crime; when we see Christianity thus perverted from its blessed and holy objects—the purification of the heart and life of man—and converted into the soother and abettor of the grossest iniquities. On this most important subject, it was my intention to have given several illus-

trations, and to have pointed out the deplorable evils of separating religion from morality ; but, both time and space preclude me from doing so, at present. In the mean time, let me exhort all who read this paper to remember, that whatever men may say, "sin is ever hateful to God, and faith without works is dead, being *alone*."

CHRISTIANUS.

Intelligence Extraordinary.

ORTHODOX ZEAL.

[WE have *literally* received the following intelligence from "*A Traveller*," who accidentally witnessed the scene which he describes. The accuracy of his statements, so far as they go, has been confirmed by a gentleman of this town, who was present on the occasion : and our only regret is, that we have not been able to procure a full and authorized report of the entire proceedings. With regard to the conduct of Mr. Bagot and his party, in obtruding themselves upon a private Society, with which they had no connexion, we shall make no comment : public opinion will easily settle the point of its delicacy and propriety. We wonder what Mr. Bagot would say, were an organized band of Unitarian ministers and laymen to force themselves into an Episcopalian church, and to assail the Bishop, his clergy, and the doctrines of the Establishment, with reproachful epithets and gross misrepresentations ! We suspect that, in such a case, he would allege that "Want of decency is want of sense." EDITOR.]

I HAVE heard of the days of chivalry, and of the wondrous feats which knights and knight-errants have performed : I have read of Goliath of Gath, who in the pride of his strength, openly defied the armies of the living God ; and who, actuated no doubt with religious zeal, solemnly cursed the Israelites by his Deities, and longed to sweep from the earth what he conceived to be an infidel and idolatrous race ; but I did not expect to see any of the puny mortals of the present age attempting to imitate such noble darings. I did not think that any one was possessed of so much confidence, or rather rashness, as would lead him to challenge a host of worthies who were assembled under the unfolded banner of Revelation, and publicly to defy them to maintain their cause. Much less did I expect that one, who had already attempted to grapple with a *David*, and who had fallen prostrate before the simple weapons of divine truth, would again begin the combat, and publicly oppose himself, to a band of equally powerful adversaries. Such exploits, I had conceived, belonged exclusively to former days. At present, though knowledge is rapidly advancing, yet chivalry appeared to me to be retrograding. I had hoped, that as men had become wiser, they had become more prudent ; that they were not now disposed to attempt what they knew was beyond their power to effect, and that

they were no longer inclined to expose themselves to certain defeat, to obloquy, and shame. But it would appear, that as ignorance blindfolds man to a sense of danger, so self-conceit renders him unconscious when he is defeated. This, at least, is the only explanation that I can give of the conduct of a certain individual, which I lately accidentally witnessed. The circumstances to which I allude are the following.

On the evening of the 22nd ult. the Irish Unitarian Christian Society held their annual meeting in Strand-street, Dublin. The assembly was large, and highly respectable; and the business of the meeting was conducted, I understood, with the usual talent, decorum, and Christian feeling. I was, however, merely an accidental spectator, and besides, I witnessed only part of the proceedings. I am neither a member of the society, nor in any way connected with it. It was not until between the hours of nine and ten o'clock that evening, that I knew anything about the meeting; and it was looking for a friend on business, that brought me at that time within the walls of Strand-street meeting-house. I shall therefore endeavour, faithfully and impartially, to relate what afterwards occurred in my presence, as far as my unaided memory can recal the circumstances; and if I fall into any error, I hope it will be attributed rather to my dim recollection of proceedings which surprised and astonished me, than to any intention on my part, to misrepresent conduct which at best appeared uncourteous and strange.

On entering the meeting-house, I observed the four worthy Unitarian ministers of Dublin, together with the Rev. Dr. Hutton of Leeds, the Rev. F. Blakely of Moneyrea, and several gentlemen of the Bar and the Medical profession. The house was crowded; and the business of the evening, it being then past ten o'clock, appeared to be nearly concluded. Andrew Carmichael, Esq. was in the chair, and Counsellor Porter was acting as secretary to the meeting. Shortly after I entered, the Rev. James Armstrong moved Mr. Carmichael out of the chair, and Dr. Stokes into it. On a vote of thanks being proposed to Mr. Carmichael, and on his reply being heard, a person most abruptly started up, about the middle of the Meeting-house, with a Bible in his hand, and said, "*I protest against the doctrines avowed by this meeting, as I consider them blasphemous and damnable;*" or words to this effect. Such a declaration was no doubt a startling one, and as might be supposed, caused some confusion. One said, the meeting is over, another requested that the gentleman should be heard, and a third declared that he was out of order. The general impression, however, seemed to be that he should be allowed to proceed; and accordingly the audience waited patiently, and was agreeably surprised to hear the gentleman renounce all creeds, confessions, and articles of faith, and appeal to the Bible, and the Bible alone, as the only true standard of faith and practice. This gentleman, I afterwards understood to be a Mr. Mooney, a student of Trinity College, Dublin. His sepulchral tone of voice and theatrical gestures, his apparent reverence for his Bible, as with lily-white hand he waved it round his head and pressed it to his bosom;

in short, his look and manner altogether would, I am sure, have produced a powerful impression on many an audience. But alas! the Unitarian Society was a bad place to display his graces. Unitarians, in general, are blamed for using their reason, and no wonder they should look for a rational proof for assertions which represent them, on the brink of eternal perdition. But, on this occasion, they looked in vain. They waited for argument, but there was none,—for reason, but it was fled far from him. Perhaps, however, it was not altogether the gentleman's fault; for, before he had come to the argumentative part of his speech—if argument he intended to have used—he was very unceremoniously interrupted by another gentleman who started up immediately beside him, and who, no doubt surprised at the Unitarian principle which Mr. Mooney was adopting, took upon himself the *onus probandi*—the herculean task of proving that the leading doctrine of the Bible was false, and that the opinions so powerfully advocated by the gentlemen he addressed, were “both dangerous and damnable.” This gentleman was recognised by several members of the society as the Rev. Mr. Bagot, of the Church of England, whose published assertions and arguments respecting the doctrine of the Trinity, &c., have been so ably answered by the Rev. J. Mitchel, of Newry.

He commenced his speech by railing against the Society for the manner in which they thought fit to conduct the business of the meeting; and he likewise made a most scurrilous attack upon the Rev. Dr. Hutton, of Leeds. It appeared that the Dr. had preached the Anniversary Sermon, for which the Society had returned him their warmest thanks. In his reply, however, he had not adopted the language of *cant*, by publicly ascribing the glory to God, by representing himself as the unworthy instrument in the hands of his Creator, and by blasphemously asserting that it was owing to a particular interposition of the Holy Spirit, that he had been enabled to compose and deliver so powerful a discourse. For this negligence he was severely censured by this self-appointed searcher of hearts, who thus testified his own humility by judging his brother, and saying unto him, “stand by, for I am holier than thou.” To this rebuke the Dr. briefly replied, in a spirit worthy of a Christian minister. I do not recollect exactly what he said; but his tone, his words and manner, deeply impressed me with a sense of the vast difference that exists between *true* and *affected* humility.

After this had occurred, and after Mr. Bagot had challenged the meeting to debate with him the doctrines in dispute between the Trinitarians and Unitarians, a short conversation ensued as to the propriety of adjourning the meeting, or proceeding, late as it was, with the debate. At this time Counsellor Porter came forward, and in a beautiful and energetic speech, requested that Mr. Bagot would be heard; and declared, if no other person would answer his arguments, he would himself reply. His request was acceded to, and Mr. Bagot proceeded.

It cannot be expected that I could from memory alone give a very full report of this gentleman's speech, nor indeed is it necessary that I should. It contained the usual string of texts, which

Trinitarians have so frequently quoted in support of their doctrines, and which Unitarians have as frequently explained. He referred to Isaiah to prove that the Almighty God was once a *child*, that he was *born* and *given* to the world. He quoted the Gospel of John to prove that the *Father* was *his own son*, and the *son* *his own father*. To a third passage he turned, and found a third deity, the Holy Ghost; and because the disciples were recommended to baptize all nations in the name of these three persons, he inferred that they were *not three* but *one*. He talked likewise of the weakness, and depravity of man, of our lost and ruined state, of our utter helplessness and misery. He shewed his own ignorance of the Calvinistic doctrine of original sin by confounding it with the doctrine of human imperfection, which no Unitarian ever denied, and then adduced proofs of his assertions from the Scriptures of Truth. He unblushingly asserted that our Lord and Master Jesus Christ *never prayed to his heavenly Father*, and then admitted that there were *some exceptions* to what he at first declared to be an invariable rule of Christ's conduct. Indeed his assertions on this subject were so directly opposed to the plainest scripture, and to our Saviour's words, that the audience seemed generally disgusted with his hardihood, and a multitude of tongues were ready to convict him by quoting the words of truth, when Counsellor Porter restored silence by requesting them to "permit the gentleman to refute himself." He likewise misrepresented Unitarians, (well might he do so after misrepresenting his Saviour,) by charging them with relying on their own merits for salvation; and he concluded a long and desultory harangue by giving us what he considered an unanswerable proof of the doctrine of infinite satisfaction. "Sin," said he, "is an infinite offence, because it is committed against an infinite Being: hence it deserves an infinite punishment; and as God is just, and therefore cannot forgive it, it would have received that punishment, had not Christ, an infinite being, interposed and shielded us from his Father's justice by suffering an infinity of misery in our stead."

Such was the scope of Mr. Bagot's speech, and if his reasoning was not perfectly logical on some points, his assertions at least were bold and striking enough. He would have spoken much longer, I suppose, in the same strain, had not the chairman intimated to him that it was time to hear some one in reply. Whether, however, it was that he considered his assertions (I cannot call them arguments) unanswerable, or whether he was afraid of the well known talents of the gentleman whom he saw preparing to reply, I know not; but after concluding his speech, he expressed his regret for having obtruded himself on the meeting, and begged to retire. Two gentlemen, however, very properly prevented him from doing so, telling him that as he and his friends had attempted to do all the mischief in their power, by disturbing their society, they should not leave the house, until they heard an answer to their statements.

When order was restored, Dr. Stokes, then in the chair, proceeded to make some remarks. He adverted to the fact, that the doctrine of the Trinity was entirely unknown during the first century of the Christian era, and made some valuable and learned observations on the origin of the Athanasian creed. On this subject he related some entertaining and important facts, which are not generally known, but which will, I hope, be published. He alluded, for the first time, as I was told, to the large sacrifices he had made for Unitarianism, and avowed that he could find no other doctrine in the Bible.

On enquiry I was told, that Dr. Stokes is one of the most amiable and learned men of the present age ; that he was once a senior fellow of Trinity College, Dublin, and that he gave up his Fellowship, then worth between 1000 and £1500 per annum for the sake of conscience. I had never seen him, or heard of him before, and was much struck with his mild and venerable appearance.

After the Dr. had concluded, Mr. Bagot seemed for a time to exult in his success. The Doctor's observations were confined to the Trinity, and the origin of the Athanasian creed. He did not intend to follow that gentleman through his rambling and contradictory speech ; and Mr. Bagot consequently rejoiced to think that his bundle of assertions and absurdities had escaped exposure. But his glorying was of short duration. A general feeling was manifested that the Rev. F. Blakely should come forward ; and Mr. Blakely consequently appeared with undaunted front. This gentleman's abilities had been previously pretty well known in Dublin, both as an eloquent and honest polemic ; but the powerful impression he had made the day before in delivering a Lecture in the very house where the society was then met, was, no doubt, one reason why the feeling for him was so general. When he came forward it was past eleven o'clock ; and though he was exhausted, no doubt, by having preached, as I was informed, two long discourses the day before, and having spoken, as I was told, more than an hour to one of the resolutions of the evening ; yet never can any one, then present, forget the deep conviction which he produced upon a numerous and enlightened assembly. He confirmed his friends, and confounded their rash opponents. He rose above himself ; and while every one admitted that he had said neither too much, nor too little, all much wondered how he had condensed so much matter into so short a speech ; for he did not speak more than twenty minutes.

No wonder that the Remonstrant Synod and his own congregation, appreciate his great talents and his successful exertions in the dispensation of sacred truth. On the spur of the moment, he followed Mr. Bagot closely through all his arguments and quotations, and shewed such familiarity with the Bible and Biblical criticism, as made the intruders anxious to retire. His criticisms and remarks were on Original Sin, the Trinity, and Infinite Satisfaction, being the subjects introduced by Mr. Bagot. Mr. Blakely maintained—and sorry I am that I cannot give his own words—that his opponents did not understand the doctrines of Original Sin,

which they confounded with the weakness of human nature. He proved the original weakness of Adam, whom Calvinists never charged with Original Sin. He urged with great clearness the original purity and innocence of little children, whom Calvinists represent as the bond-slaves of satan; and in answer to some strange assertions that Mr. Bagot made on this subject, he referred him to that passage wherein we are informed that our Saviour took them up in his arms and blessed them, and declared to his disciples, that unless *they* became as little children, they should not enter the kingdom of heaven. He asserted that the covenant of works, so called, was a mere assumption without any scripture authority to support it. He denied the possibility of Adam, or any created being, committing an infinite sin, as all beings are weak and imperfect. He pledged himself that every Unitarian in existence depended for salvation, not on the merit of good works, but on the mercy of God. He proved the impossibility of an infinite satisfaction, unless Trinitarians would admit that God had died; and that the human invented and unscriptural doctrine of two natures in God, even if granted to them, would not answer their purpose, inasmuch as the divine nature could not die, and the human nature could not give an infinite satisfaction. God is unchangeable, said he, and could not have only one nature at one time, and two natures at another. Neither could a person with one nature be equal to a person with two. He shewed that the language employed by Christ and his apostles, when speaking of his power, knowledge, and death, was used of him as a *person*, and not of any *part* or *nature* of his person. He illustrated this argument by a quotation, in which *personal pronouns* were used. He thought that Mr. Bagot had answered himself respecting divine worship, by admitting *certain exceptions*; but he would add, that several *different original terms*, as Mr. Bagot must know, were all translated by the same common word *worship*; though the term, which signified divine adoration in the proper sense, was restricted to the Father alone. After several observations of a similar kind, Mr. Blakely proposed for Mr. Bagot's consideration *three classes* of texts, which he would produce from the Old and New Testaments.

The *first* class were those that plainly demonstrated the sole and exclusive Deity of the Father of the Universe. Under this head, he quoted a few texts, and called upon Trinitarians to give them a Trinitarian interpretation, if they could.

The *second* class were the passages in which Christ and his apostles not only admit, but assert the subordination of the Son. Here Mr. Blakely again with great plainness and power, employed criticisms to prove that the *pronouns*, used by Christ and his apostles when admitting his dependance upon God, were employed when speaking of Christ's *person*, and could not be understood by grammarians as referring to *this nature* or *that*, but to *him*, as to any other being, and to his *whole nature*.

The *third* class of texts which he introduced, were those of a more obscure and figurative kind. In these, he repeated the passages which had been adduced by Mr. Bagot to prove Trinitarian

opinions, and said that he would hold him to his own interpretations wherever similar phrases occurred, especially in the original scriptures. He must assert, he said, that no controversialist, who preferred truth to party, could object to this rule. But he much feared, if Mr. Bagot would adhere to his own interpretations, that the Bible would prove *too much* for all Christians, and every church. Here Mr. Blakely quoted passages, which, according to the interpretation put upon *similar words and phrases* by Mr. Bagot, in his famous texts, would prove cities, altars, and men, to be Gods. He would bind, he said, his Trinitarian opponents to their own explanations of the *same phrase*, and especially when they were the same in the original scriptures, and would thereby make them the advocates of Gods many and Lords many. He was no rhymer of texts like his opponents, and though he cared little about chapters and verses, he held sacred the whole divine revelation, and thought it sufficient to give the language of the Bible. He had not appealed to the Bible as some gentlemen did, and then put forward popular phrases instead of plain scripture. They had mixed up the *Creed phrases* of *God the Son* and *God the Holy Ghost*, with the *Bible phrase*, "ONE GOD THE FATHER."

Such is a brief outline of Mr. Blakely's speech, as far as I can remember. His language of course I cannot recollect, and many of his arguments I may have forgotten. But could that gentleman recollect them himself, he would confer a great favour on me and many others by giving them to the public.

When he had concluded his commanding and convincing reply, Mr. Bagot came forward in an humbled tone, and wished to say a few words by way of rejoinder. To this the Rev. James Armstrong said, that he was at perfect liberty, but he (Mr. Armstrong) must remind him, that in justice, Mr. Blakely must likewise be heard again, if he spoke, and observed that it was then nearly twelve o'clock. Mr. Bagot was sorry that his appearance was considered an intrusion, and would not then farther press the consideration of the subject. Consequently, the meeting separated.

This is a plain statement of what occurred in my presence; and from what I witnessed, it appeared evident that great preparations had been made by some Trinitarian ministers, and one or two theological students of Trinity College, to challenge the Unitarian society. They came with Bibles, and had favourite passages marked, which they could either read or repeat at pleasure. Besides the gentlemen who spoke, there was a number of other persons in the house, whose business seemed to be to applaud these two speakers, and to disturb the society. And had it not been for one or two gentlemen, as I understood, who by looks and threats endeavoured to check their zeal, they would have carried their system of annoyance to a much greater length.

Another fact of which I was afterwards informed, will serve to show that the attack was premeditated. At an early period of the evening, before many speeches had been made, and before any *doctrinal points* had been particularly brought before the meeting, the chairman received an anonymous note, requesting him to state

whether any gentleman would be allowed to speak in opposition to the *doctrines* promulgated by that society. This shewed that these gentlemen were acting on a regular plan, and that their harangues were not merely the impulse of the moment. But their sharpened arrows fell powerless before the impenetrable shield of right reason and revelation, which Mr. Blakely opposed to them. The society was taken by surprise, but the fortress of truth is always impregnable; and the assailants retreated in shame, in confusion, and dismay. They sought for glory, but they met defeat; for honour, but alas! dishonour was their lot.

A TRAVELLER.

OBITUARY.

ON the 17th ultimo, in the 90th year of her age, Mrs. Barber of Tullyquilly, near Rathfriland. This amiable woman was exceedingly placid in her manners, and, at the same time, very fixed in religious principles, which were Unitarian. Her mind was clear to the close of life, through which her charities were numerous, and conferred in such a way that she "let not her left hand know what her right hand did."

Her father, the Rev. Andrew Kennedy, was minister of Mourne, and of a family long distinguished in the Presbyterian Church of Ireland. Her husband, the Rev. Samuel Barber, was, for more than 50 years, Presbyterian Minister of Rathfriland, and in his day one of the most learned and liberal members of the General Synod. He died in September, 1811, and could he revisit his brethren in Synod assembled, he would not be readmitted into their body without a profession of several opinions which he disavowed during his ministry; and must wonder at the many abridgments which have taken place in the *rights* of congregations, and the *liberties* of pastors. He was a man of constant study, great benevolence, and unspotted character. He wrote against a Bishop of Cloyne,—an opponent of Presbyterianism,—and received the approbation of many of his contemporaries.

In the Belfast, on the 15th ultimo, in the 83d year of her age, Mrs. Elizabeth Kennedy. Her father, the Rev. Gilbert Kennedy was for several years Minister of the 2nd Presbyterian Congregation, Belfast. She was not only of the same name, but of the same family as Mrs. Barber, an account of whose death is given above.

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JOSHUA AND THE JUDGES.*

IN ten successive numbers of *The Bible Christian* I have traced the most important events and edifying characters recorded in the Books of Moses; but I cannot leave them without endeavouring to impress the reader with a due sense of their incalculable value. Their contents are so important, indeed essential, as the foundation of true religion, that this circumstance alone might induce us to believe, that the composition of them was a special order of Providence: for, without their information, not only the creation of the world and of its inhabitants, with the peculiar dignity and destiny of our species, would have been buried in oblivion; but also their dispersion, and distribution into different tribes and nations would have remained unknown: and when the first national histories came to be composed, they would relate the transactions of a race of beings, of whose origin nothing could ever be ascertained; of whose condition, situation, and former progress no record would remain. Agreeably to this, the Athenians conceived themselves to have sprung from the earth. The progressive improvements, in the arts and manners of human life, during the Patriarchal ages, would have been lost; the original constitution of the Jewish people, or the design of its formation, could never be discovered; and consequently, when Christ appeared, no people could be found, by whom he would be understood, or to whom he could refer for the original Revelation to mankind. It would appear to his contemporaries incredible and unaccountable, that God should never before

* For the state of society among the Jews, see p. 147.

have interfered in human concerns; and such an insulated fact, as the appearance of a divine Messenger, among an obscure and despised people, of whose history the world knew nothing, and who knew little of themselves, could hardly command the respect or even the attention of the Pagan world. Of such momentous importance was the composition and preservation of these books.

At the time of the emigration from Egypt, Joshua was a young man of the tribe of Ephraim, and was one of two emigrants who alone entered the promised land. During this interval he was the chief minister and confidential servant of Moses. Though so young a man, he was sent with a detachment to repel a powerful Arabian tribe who attempted to obstruct this formidable inroad into their territory. He alone attended Moses in his ascent to Mount Sinai. He was also one of those who were deputed to spy out the land of Canaan, of which he brought a favourable and encouraging report. He zealously exhorted the people to an immediate invasion, but his efforts were defeated by their timid and turbulent spirit. On their final approach to the promised land, after the death of all that generation except himself and Caleb, he was solemnly ordained and proclaimed by Moses to be the commander and chief of the host. Num. xxvii. 18. He was also appointed, with Eleazar the High Priest and the princes of the tribes,—to divide the land by inheritance.—Num. xxxiv. 17.

Before the death of Moses, the kingdoms to the East of the Jordan, had been all reduced to submission, and soon after that event, Joshua led the Israelites over the river, and took possession of Jericho. At this time the inhabitants of Gibeon, a neighbouring city, sued for peace. Pretending that they came from a distant country beyond the promised land, their petition was granted, but the artifice was soon discovered. The faith of treaty was maintained; but they were condemned to perpetual servitude as hewers of wood and drawers of water for the Levites. For seven years Joshua carried on the war with vigour and success: and having conquered the whole of the land, he distributed it among the tribes according to the original design, when he gave up the Ghost, being 110 years old.

The extirpation of the Canaanitish tribes is a subject of nice and delicate discussion ; for we must distinguish between the actions of men and the providence of God. The wanton and unnecessary atrocities which disgrace this transaction are to be ascribed to that perverse and hard-hearted race, to which, in every age, from their apostacy and rebellion in the wilderness, to the accumulated horrors preceding the final destruction of Jerusalem, the bitterest reproaches and most direful denunciation of their prophets may be deservedly applied. The plan itself and the means necessary to its accomplishment were fore-ordained and directed by the providence of God. We know that from the time of Abraham the occupation of this country by his descendants was in the contemplation of the Almighty ; and we now see that it formed an essential part of that dispensation, which involves the highest destinies of man.

Still the circumstances attending it often shock the feelings of the humane, and even shake the faith of the pious. We can see the most amiable and virtuous fall around us in the bloom of youth, and the most valued friends, and valuable members of society, perish in the vigour of life without reproaching the goodness of God. We can reconcile ourselves to the fate of hundreds of unoffending persons emersed in the depths of the sea, without expecting that the course of nature should be changed in their behalf ; or that the winds and waves should vary their course and abate their fury, when any frail bark is in their way. We can hear of thousands slaughtered in the field of battle, and of multitudes destroyed by war, pestilence and famine, earthquakes, volcanoes and hurricanes, and calmly ascribe such calamities to the righteous judgments of heaven. We even read of the whole human race swept off the face of the earth by the flood, because the "wickedness of man was great in the earth, and all the thoughts of his heart were only evil continually ;" and yet we revolt at the extinction of an impious race plunged in impiety and vice, and addicted to the most cruel and licentious superstitions. But the judgments of God are unsearchable, his thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor his ways as our ways. They are too high for us, we cannot comprehend them. It is the height of presumption in us to circumscribe the rights or powers of the Creator over the creatures that he has made.

By the death of Joshua, the general government of the confederacy was dissolved; the Ark at Shilo was the only symbol of authority. Each tribe was a separate republic governed by its own magistrates. The consequences of this general anarchy were civil wars, a hostile or corrupting intercourse with the natives still remaining in the land, and invasion and oppression by foreign nations. Of each of these calamities I shall furnish an instance, without regard to the order of time, which is of no importance to my purpose.

1. The civil war with the Benjamites originated in a cruel and scandalous outrage; as prosecuted almost to the annihilation of that noble tribe; even their women were massacred, so as to leave no hope of progeny: The men of Jabish Gilead were put to the sword for declining to join in this war, and their women were transferred to the tribe of Benjamin; but their number not being sufficient, the deficiency was supplied by a stratagem similar to the rape of the Sabines.

2. The extirpation of the natives had been left incomplete, and when the greater number of the Israelites were put in quiet possession of their inheritance, they became indifferent to the interests of their brethren, who on their part through indolence or inability suffered the idolators to retain a portion of the sacred territory, and even united with them in family connexions. This of course occasioned a participation in religious rites, and accordingly we continually read of their worshipping in high places and groves, and of their idolatrous revellings under every green tree. A remarkable instance of these dissensions and of this confusion of idolatrous superstitions with the Levitical worship, appeared in the case of Micah and the children of Dan. A portion of that tribe being incommoded and straitened in their quarters by the antient inhabitants, determined, instead of expelling their troublesome neighbours, to seek elsewhere for an enlargement of their limits. About this time, a man of Mount Ephraim, whose name was Micah, being charged with having stolen a large sum of money from his mother, and having confessed the fact, they agreed to convert the silver into two idols. Having proceeded so far with success, he very reasonably concluded, that he who could manufacture gods,

might certainly make a priest, and he consecrated one of his sons. But soon after meeting a Levite in very destitute circumstances, he encouraged him to dwell in his house, and to be unto him a father and a priest. And he went in; and Micah consecrated him also. Soon after the Danites arrived at the house of Micah, and seized upon his gods and seduced his priest. "When Micah had assembled his neighbours and overtaken them, they turned their faces and said unto Micah, What aileth thee, that thou comest with such a company? And he said, Ye have taken away my gods, which I made, and my priest, and ye are gone away, and what have I more? and what is this that ye say unto me? what aileth thee? And they said, Let not thy voice be heard among us, lest some angry fellows run upon thee and thou lose thy life, with the lives of thy household?" They then proceeded to seize by force upon the land of a peaceable and unsuspecting people, who were "quiet and secure, and they smote them with the edge of the sword, and burned their city with fire."

3. The promised land was encircled with hostile nations, the Philistines kept possession of the cities on the shore of the Mediterranean, and the Edomites inclosed it on the south; the Amalekites, the Moabites, and the kings of Mesopotamia threatened it on the East and made incursions as far as the Jordan. On the north, the Canaanites established a formidable power, and on one occasion penetrated into the heart of the country.

This turbulent and dangerous state called forth a number of men of extraordinary strength and valour; they have obtained the appellation of judges, but they were rather military chiefs, each of them the champion of his own tribe. Of the judges of Israel, however, the most illustrious was a woman. Deborah is introduced to us with simple majesty as "sitting under her palm-tree judging the tribes of Israel, who came up to her for judgment." She was a woman of a magnanimous spirit, and a genius for that lofty style of poetry which rouses and urges men to noble darings. When the Canaanitish army entered the country, she appointed Barak to collect 10,000 men at mount Tabor, and promised to draw Sisera the General of the Canaanites into a situation favourable for his operations. When Barak

declined the command except she would accompany him, "She said, I will surely go with thee; notwithstanding the journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honour; for the Lord shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman." And Deborah arose and went with Barak. The mountainous country of Mount Tabor was judiciously chosen, being secure from the chariots of the enemy. Hence seizing a favourable opportunity, the Israelitish army descended, and so discomfited Sisera, and all his host, that he lighted down off his chariot and fled away on his feet. He sought refuge in the tent of Jael a Hebrew woman, who while he slept, took one of the iron spikes which fastened her tent, "and an hammer in her hand, went softly unto him, and smote the nail into his temples, and fastened it into the ground, for he was asleep and weary: so that he died."

"Deborah's hymn of triumph is worthy of the victory. The solemn religious commencement—the picturesque description of the state of the country—the mustering of the troops from all quarters—the sudden transition to the most contemptuous sarcasm against the tribes that stood aloof—the life, fire, and energy of the battle—the bitter pathos of the close lyric poetry has nothing in any language which can surpass the boldness and animation of this striking production."—MILLMAN.*

* I subjoin Millman's translation of the Song of Deborah, as the reader may like to compare it with the authorized version. Judges v.

"Thus sang Deborah and Barak, son of Abinoam,
In the day of victory thus they sang;
That Israel hath wrought her mighty vengeance,
That the willing people rushed to battle,
Oh, therefore, praise Jehovah!

Hear, ye kings! give ear, ye princes!
I to Jehovah, I will lift the song,
I will sound the harp to Jehovah, God of Israel!

Jehovah! when thou wentest forth from Seir!
When thou marchedst through the fields of Edom!
Quaked the earth, and poured the heavens,
Yea, the clouds poured down with water:
Before Jehovah's face the mountains melted,
That Sinai before Jehovah's face,
The God of Israel.

In the conclusion, her sarcastic triumph over the mother of Sisera is beautiful in itself, singular in kind, and strongly characteristic of a female author.

In the days of Shangar, son of Anath,
In Jael's days, untrodden were the highways,
Through the winding by-path stole the traveller ;
Upon the plains deserted lay the hamlets,
Even till that I, till Deborah arose,
Till I arose in Israel a mother.

They chose new gods :
War was in all their gates !
Was buckler seen, or lance,
'Mong forty thousand sons of Israel ?

My soul is yours, ye chiefs of Israel !
And ye, the self-devoted of the people,
Praise ye the Lord with me !
Ye that ride upon the snow-white asses ;
Ye that sit to judge on rich divans ;
Ye that plod on foot the open way,
Come, meditate the song.

For the noise of plundering archers by the wells of water,
Now they meet and sing aloud Jehovah's righteous acts :
His righteous acts the hamlets sing upon the open plains,
And enter their deserted gates the people of Jehovah.

Awake, Deborah, awake !
Awake, uplift the song !
Barak, awake ; and lead thy captives captive,
Thou son of Abinoam !

With him a valiant few went down against the mighty,
With me Jehovah's people went down against the strong.
First Ephraim, from the Mount of Amalek,
And after thee the bands of Benjamin !
From Machir came the rulers of the people,
From Zebulon those that bear the marshall's staff ;
And Issachar's brave princes came with Deborah,
Issachar, the strength of Barak :
They burst into the valley on his footsteps.

By Reuben's fountains there was deep debating —
Why sat'st thou idle, Reuben, 'mid thy herd stalls ?
Was it to hear the lowing of thy cattle ?
By Reuben's fountains there was deep debating —

And Gilead lingered on the shores of Jordan —
And Dan, why dwelled he among his ships ? —
And Asser dwelled in his sea-shore havens,
And sat upon his rocks precipitous.
But Zebulon was a death-defying people,
And Napthali from off the mountain heights.

The state of the country in these distracted times, is concisely depicted by Deborah in these words: "The highways were unoccupied, and the travellers walked

Came the king and fought,
Fought the kings of Canaan,
By Taanach, by Megiddo's waters,
For the golden booty that they won not.

From the heavens they fought 'gainst Sisera,
In their courses fought the stars against him:
The torrent Kishon swept them down,
That ancient river Kishon.
So trample thou, my soul, upon their might.

Then stamped the clattering hoofs of prancing horses
At the flight, at the flight of the mighty.

Curse ye Meroz, saith the angel of the Lord,
Curse, a twofold curse upon her dastard sons;
For they came not to the succour of Jehovah,
To the succour of Jehovah 'gainst the mighty.

Above all women blest be Jael,
Heber the Kenite's wife,
O'er all the women blest, that dwell in tents.

Water he asked—she gave him milk,
The curded milk, in her costliest bowl.

Her left hand to the nail she set,
Her right hand to the workman's hammer—
Then Sisera she smote—she clave his head;
She bruised—she pierced his temples.
At her feet he bowed; he fell; he lay;
At her feet he bowed; he fell;
Where he bowed, there he fell dead.

From the window she looked forth, she cried,
The mother of Sisera, through the lattice:
'Why is his chariot so long in coming!
Why tarry the wheels of his chariot?'
Her prudent women answered her—
Yea she herself gave answer to herself—
'Have they not seized, not shared the spoil?
One damsel, or two damsels to each chief?
To Sisera a many-coloured robe,
A many coloured robe, and richly broidered,
Many-coloured and broidered round the neck.'

Thus perish all thine enemies, Jehovah;
And those who love thee, like the sun, shine forth,
The sun in all its glory."

through by-ways. The inhabitants of the villages ceased," being obliged to take refuge in strongholds or fortified cities.

The times of the judges have been not inaptly denominated the heroic age of the Hebrews.

From the brief and condensed narrative in the Book of Judges, one might suspect that the whole of this period was overspread with the turbulent anarchy, aggravated by ferocious contests, and heinous crimes; and that the plans of Moses never came into operation, but were frustrated in the very commencement: but it should be remembered that this period lasted for 450 years, Acts, xiii. 20—that these events were generally confined to single tribes, and occupied a small portion of this long succession of generations, while the nation at large were enjoying, in tranquillity, the happy frame of society established by the Mosaic law.

The line of Judges closes with Eli and Samuel; but these were of the sacerdotal order, and their lives are connected with a different period of Jewish history.

ERASMUS.



COMMENTARY UPON ISAIAH, vii. 14, ix. 6.

HAVING read in your last number, some observations by a correspondent signed "Q," on Isaiah ix. 6, I have been prompted to furnish you with a more enlarged commentary on that passage. Though we know it to be a favourite text with believers in a "Triune God" in support of the "Supreme Deity" of Christ, I shall endeavour to prove, to their useful conviction, I trust, if they will for once do themselves and us the justice of exercising their reason, that the imaginary aid which they derive from it is totally destitute of foundation. As the foregoing passage in Isaiah vii. 14, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel," is closely allied with it, I would beg, should I not be occupying too much of your valuable publication, to offer some previous remarks on it, for the better understanding the aim and purport of the whole of this prophetic announcement.

I perfectly agree with your correspondent "Q," so far as he has gone, in his view of the passage—that though it may be *prefigurative* of the coming of Christ, it does not refer *immediately* to Christ, but to Hezekiah, the son of Ahaz, who was to be born, and to reign in Jerusalem. And we both agree on this point with the best modern commentators. If we examine the passage, however, for ourselves, we need not have occasion to *borrow* the sentiments even of the most approved critics, in coming to the same sound and rational conclusion. Let any reader of common understanding open his Bible, and by referring to the notes in the margin, he will find a sufficient "*Key*" to unravel the whole mystery of the prophecy, and by which he may steer himself clear of all the mazes and labyrinths in which Trinitarians have involved it, by false and erroneous interpretations of the language of the inspired writer.

The occasion of the prophecy is fully and distinctly stated in the first verse of this chapter. "And it came to pass in the days of Ahaz, the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, *that* Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah, the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up toward Jerusalem to war against it, but could not prevail against it." This puts us in full possession of the immediate cause of the prophetic declaration. Under this threatened invasion, the Prophet is ordered of the Lord to go forth to meet Ahaz, to comfort him and to assure him that the design of the two kings against his government should not prove successful. In confirmation of which, the Lord by the Prophet gave unto him this sign—"Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings."

The term "virgin" I understand here in a figurative sense, meaning the "city of Jerusalem." In support of this I may observe, that the same title is not only frequently applied in scripture to "Jerusalem,"—but indiscriminately to any city, state, tribe, or congregation of people. For example ii. Kings, xix. 21, we find mention-

ed the "*virgin*, the daughter of Zion;"—also, "the daughter of Jerusalem." Jeremiah, xiv. 17, "The *virgin* daughter of my people, &c.;—also xviii. 13, "The *virgin* of Israel;"—xxxi. 4, "Thou shalt be built, O *virgin* of Israel;"—21 v., "Turn again, O *virgin* of Israel." Amos v. 2, "The *virgin* of Israel is fallen." In Isaiah xxiii. 12, the city of Tyre is denominated the "*virgin* daughter of Zion." In xlvii. 1, we find—"O *virgin* daughter of Babylon." In Jeremiah—"O *virgin* daughter of Egypt." I shall not detain your readers with further references to passages in which a similar application of the term occurs, but proceed to the illustration.

The meaning of the prophecy, then, as adopted by the best modern commentators, and which I consider to be the most rational and consistent, is—that Jerusalem, which is frequently styled the "*virgin*," should give birth to a personage, who, on account of distinction, and the remarkable events which should take place in his life, was to be called Immanuel; and before he should be many years old, or his mind sufficiently matured, as to "know to refuse the evil and choose the good," the land which took up arms against him should be forsaken of both her kings; which prediction shortly afterwards came to pass, as Rezin and Pekah were both slain. But had the prophecy related to Christ, and not to some nearer date of accomplishment, it could have been no sign or consolation to Ahaz; as the birth of Christ did not happen till above seven hundred years after that period; so that the whole of the passage refers to events which actually took place in the reign of Ahaz; and he beheld in his own day the literal fulfilment of the prophecy, in the birth of Hezekiah, and in the overthrow and destruction of the two kings who opposed him.

I go on to shew from the very nature of the language employed, and from the circumstances which characterize the subject of the prophecy, that it cannot by any means apply strictly to Christ. We are told concerning the person implied in the announcement, that "Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil and choose the good." I am aware that other and perhaps better versions of the original have been given: that some invert the present order of the passage—and

others substitute the words "*till*" or "*when*" instead "*that* he may know." I shall take the words, however, exactly as we find them, and endeavour to explain their drift and bearing.

This language, then, which is evidently figurative, is an example of the general simplicity of scripture narrative, and the plain and familiar style in which truths of importance are frequently expressed—a style, in every instance I might say, adapted to the habits of the people and state of the age in which the writers or speakers lived. Judging from the *literal* signification of the words, we would naturally infer, that the "eating of butter and honey" was the primary cause, or the prescribed means by which the "child" should acquire the capacity of discerning between "good and evil." Such an assertion in the present day would be considered perfectly ridiculous, and could not at any time be strictly true. For, though "butter and honey" we must admit, are very good things, I do not see how this species of food more than any other should possess the "virtue" of quickening the apprehension or enlarging the powers of the understanding. Why then does the Prophet employ this language? It must have some meaning, else he never would have used it. The proper explanation I conceive is, that "butter and honey" being in great abundance in eastern countries, especially during the shepherd life, and among the principal esculents for the sustenance of man, they were more naturally drawn upon than any other among external objects, in symbolizing the meaning of this part of his prophecy. And though I do not pretend to much skill in the kinds of nutriment best adapted to the constitution of children, I can clearly trace the line of resemblance between these two cases—that as children being accustomed with different kinds of food, by experience, form a predilection for that which is sweetest to the palate—so that morally speaking, the mind when early instructed in the principles of good and evil, right and wrong, is, by habits of reflection and its gradual progress to maturity, better qualified for judging between what is prudent or imprudent, profitable or pernicious, and acquires a power and a facility within itself of forming correct views on all matters of general utility. So that the language

used, when divested of the figure, shews in plain terms the kind of education which Hezekiah should receive, which we have no doubt as being signified by the eating of "butter and honey" would be a *wholesome* and *sound* one—and that the early tutoring of the mind of the young prince in matters of civil polity, in the laws and government of nations, or whatever else should be most beneficial to him in his future appointment to the throne, would qualify him for directing with discretion the affairs of the state, and enacting such measures as would be most conducive to the happiness of the people. But that even before that period, before his education should be completed, and when he was only yet in his minority, "the desolation of the destroyers should cease."

There is only one other interpretation of the passage in its present construction, which can be given—more *literal*, but in result the same, viz. —that Hezekiah being himself brought up with tenderness and in the enjoyment of every comfort, it should predispose him to consult the happiness and prosperity of his subjects in his after government of the kingdom. This view, however, is open to the objection, that ease and affluence in youth do not always lead to wisdom and discretion in more advanced years, but very often have the effect of rendering men profligate, imprudent, and inattentive to the interests of society; whilst we doubt not that the princes and kings of Jerusalem in general, even those who "reigned not wisely" but "did that which was evil in sight of the Lord," enjoyed from their youth up a liberal share of the good things of this life, which their high birth and exalted station would naturally supply.

In many respects, however, the prophecy cannot in the most distant sense apply to Christ. The character spoken of was born of princely parents—was the inmate of a palace, and nurtured in all the ease and delicacy of Eastern magnificence. But Christ was born of poor and humble parentage, in the most obscure corner of Judea, and was brought up in poverty and indigence. We read nothing of his *temporal prosperity*. We read nothing of his living amidst the luxuries of courts. We read nothing of him "who was the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," participating in

the munificent banquets of a princely table. We read nothing of his refined and polished education, with whom "the wisdom of this world" and the affected and ostentatious pride of human learning "was as foolishness." We are taught, that he derived not his knowledge from *human sources*, but by superior communications from Heaven,—that "the spirit of God was upon him," and that "he grew in favour both with God and man."

But there is another most important consideration, which I think decidedly proves that the prophecy could not relate to Christ, and this is, that the immediate cause of the prophecy, and the circumstances attending Christ's advent upon earth bear no shade of resemblance, but were in every sense of the word *directly contrary*. The birth of the "child," which should be given as a "sign," was announced under a threatened invasion of the land—while that of Christ took place when the land was perfectly free from the ravages and dangers of war. At the birth of Christ there was no "dreadful note of preparation," no "marshalling in arms," no terror or apprehension excited by the approach of a foe, no princes or rulers meditating against each other conquest and slaughter. The different contending powers, who had so long kept the world in flame, had laid down their arms; the enmity and strifes of nations had subsided, and a universal cessation from hostilities prevailed. It was the Augustine age of peace. The temple of Janus was shut, and a still and unbroken repose was diffused throughout every quarter of the then known world. It seemed as if an Almighty hand had interposed, and as if a divine mandate had gone abroad over the earth to quell the oppressor's wrath, and to stay the boisterous tumult of nations. And as well betokened the calm and tranquil serenity of the times, the birth of the Messiah was announced, in strains of celestial rejoicing, to shepherds keeping watch over their flocks by night.

I grant that after the overthrow of the two invading kings in the time of Ahaz, there was a similarity between the *reign* of Hezekiah and that of Christ; the one being the "sign" and restorer of *temporal* peace and prosperity to Jerusalem; the other being the founder of a kingdom which should confer *spiritual* peace and

happiness on all who should become his true and faithful disciples. But this does not bear out the applicability of the prophecy to Christ *in the first instance*, as if so, I assert, that the prophecy and the fulfilment of it in regard to Christ, were *inconsistent*, and we will thus be led to call in question the truth of inspiration. If it had related strictly to Christ, to have exactly coincided, he would have made his appearance not at a time of *peace* but of *war*: and unless we can in our love of *spiritualizing* every passage of the sacred writings in which merely historical characters and events are depicted, go the length of saying, that the “powers of darkness” in the form of Heathenish idolatry and ignorance and superstition, were, like the two kings against Ahaz, threatening to overwhelm and enslave the human race under the galling yoke of moral and intellectual bondage—we cannot bear out even its most remote application to the Messiah. As this, however, is an extent to which none but enthusiasts will attempt to go, I rest satisfied with, and confidently maintain the clear, natural, and appropriate relation of the prediction to Hezekiah, and as only bearing a dark, distant, and indistinct reference to Christ, “the son of the living God.”

But independent of the arguments which I have here advanced, I ask Trinitarians—how is it possible for them to conceive that God himself who *gave* the “sign,” or who directed the prophet in its announcement, was at the same time foretelling the *birth of himself*? That the same being who *communicated the spirit of the prophecy*, was the *person* afterwards to appear in *whom* the prophecy should be fulfilled?

Besides, to suppose, a conclusion to which the Trinitarian hypothesis directly leads,—that the eternal and unchangeable Jehovah, the Almighty Ruler both in heaven and on earth, was the person spoken of to be *born* of a “virgin”—to undergo a systematic course of diet—to be purposely *fed* and *nourished* on particular kinds of food in a sequestered spot of this earthly planet, which to the vast extent of his boundless creation, is as a mote in the sun-beam or a drop in the ocean!—to hazard the conception, that He was to become the *subject* of such *human changes* and *processes*, in order that He, the God of infinite wisdom,

the Lord of conscience, the searcher of hearts, the Creator of all spiritual intelligences, and the Divine and original framer and appointer of all moral decrees and enactments for the guidance and direction of his fallible creatures, might "*know*, to refuse the evil and choose the good," is a paradox so utterly incredible, and withal so glaringly profane, that were it not for the blinding and perverting influences of bigotry and prejudice, even the most senseless and stupid would not give such an opinion a momentary resting-place in their imagination.

To give Trinitarians, however, the full benefit of the passage, and supposing the prophecy to refer directly to Christ, we nevertheless affirm the application of the title "*Immanuel*" does not by any means prove him to be the supreme Jehovah, as the same title is applied promiscuously in scripture to *men*, in relation to some remarkable circumstance or eminent quality connected with their life or character;—to magistrates, to princes, to men in authority. In *Exod. iv. 6*, it is represented that Moses should be unto Aaron "*instead of a God*." At the *vii. 1*, also of the same book, we find these words, "And the Lord said unto Moses, see, I have made thee a *God* to Pharaoh." *Psalms 82, 1*, "God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; He judgeth among the *Gods*." And also at the 6 verse, "I have said *ye are Gods*; and all of you are children of the Most High." I might quote many other passages of a similar nature, but these are sufficient to establish the position which I have laid down.

"Abiel" signifies, God my Father; "Elijah," God the Lord; Joshua," the Lord the Saviour; "Ishmael" God that hears; "Lemuel," God with them; and correspondent with the foregoing, "*Immanuel*," God with us. So that there is nothing extraordinary in the application of the term, nothing in it demonstrative of *Supreme Deity*, and can only denote distinction; as this ascriptive style of lofty titles was very common among Eastern nations, and is prevalent even at the present day.

J. C.

[FOR THE BIBLE CHRISTIAN.]

PIETY.

THAT a variety of character should subsist among individuals, is a circumstance in human life, for which it is not difficult to account. Without speculating upon any original diversity in the mental or corporeal constitution of different men, it is easy to see, that the various modes of life in which we are engaged, must produce an equal variety of character. Neither is it difficult to conceive that different nations should vary as much as individuals, for the prevalence of the same domestic habits and civil customs may occasion an uniformity of behaviour; and the constitution of a government or of a national church may operate upon a people, as a plan of education affects the morals, sentiments, and conduct of an individual. There is another variety, which is undeniable, but arises from so many circumstances, that the causes of it cannot be so easily traced. In the same country, different generations of people are generally distinguished by different qualities. The vices which prevailed among our forefathers, have now fallen into disrepute, but have been succeeded by others better adapted to the taste of the age; and the virtues for which former times are celebrated, have now gone out of fashion; though I hope they too have been replaced by some valuable characteristics, by which our ancestors were not distinguished. Whether the balance be in favour of modern or of ancient times, is a question that was condemned as an unprofitable subject of inquiry at so early a period as the time of Solomon. "Say not thou, what is the cause, why the former days were better than these? for thou dost not enquire wisely concerning these things." It is not therefore my intention to institute such a comparison; but to take notice of the decay of piety, for whatever claim the present generation may put in to other species of moral excellence, it will be generally admitted, that we are less pious than our ancestors. Those who are most inattentive to religious duties and religious meditation, will for the most part admit the charge, and defend themselves by taking credit for more substantial virtues and more useful exercises: while those who have or who make any pretensions to

sions to a reputation for piety will join in lamenting the neglect of it among others. It is not, therefore, necessary to establish a fact, which is so generally acknowledged both by those who admire this quality, and those who do not.

How difficult soever it may be, to account for other shades of difference in the characters of succeeding generations, and for the alternate rise and fall of different dispositions good and bad, I think it not so hard to assign a reason for the circumstance which I have just stated. It arises, I apprehend, in the first place, from the extraordinary increase of amusement and business, by which the present times are distinguished from preceding periods. Piety requires to be nourished by study and contemplation; and will necessarily decay, when the thoughts of men are anxiously engrossed by political transactions, important business, or frivolous entertainment. That the mind may have something to contemplate, it is necessary, that it be early stocked with some fundamental and indubitable religious principles, with suitable moral illustrations and historical examples: but this essential branch of education is often notoriously neglected. That it may acquire a habit of dwelling on such subjects, it must have been early impressed with reverent sentiments and awful conceptions of the great truths of religion: but to this an affected and an erroneous liberality, and too great an ambition to see their children distinguished for superficial accomplishments, are effectual bars; and finally, to all these, a retired and domestic habit of life is indispensably necessary; but this also is notoriously contrary to the taste and practice of the age in which we live.

In the second place it proceeds from the present character of religion, which is dogmatical and controversial. These propensities are inconsistent with genuine piety, and great obstacles to its progress. In former times people acquiesced in their catechisms without doubt, and heard their preachers without suspicion. If any controversy arose, it was conducted in bulky volumes by divines and other learned men, and these were read by few except persons of the same class. Thus the surface of religious society was a dead calm: at the bottom was a solemn and profound piety. Those who now

maintain the same opinions are not suffered to enjoy them in the same tranquillity. They are disturbed with opposition, irritated at being obliged to think, and provoked when forced to doubt. Accordingly they maintain their unintelligible doctrines with obstinacy, form uncharitable opinions of their opponents, and assail them with opprobrious epithets. Their assailants profess to be inquirers after truth, and not to be wedded to any system of doctrine. These light troops attack their solid and impenetrable phalanx with slings and arrows, and missiles of every kind. This active mode of hostility is carried on with alacrity and spirit, strongly contrasted with the temper of their adversaries.

It has been always observed that the assailant has more spirit than the defendant: *plus animi est inferenti quam pro pulsanti injuriam*. They therefore carry on their warfare with more hilarity and good humour, though not without a culpable share of sarcasm and bitterness. The most active principle in both is the spirit of party. Instead of cumbersome folios, controversy is retailed in sermons, tracts, pamphlets, periodicals and public speeches, and the substance of these is discussed and sifted at every tea-table. I would not be understood to direct my censure against any one of these parties in particular; they are all equally criminal. Least of all would I wish to condemn the inquirers after truth; but I must say that all the qualities I have mentioned are hostile to the advancement of genuine piety.

By genuine piety I mean an habitual and actuating sense, that we live in the presence of God, accompanied, as it must be, with a desire of conciliating his favour. As the generality of men have not taken any pains to cultivate this disposition and to acquire this conviction, they are too apt to exclude piety from the list of virtues and its natural expression from the rank of duties. But surely such conclusions as these must be formed upon a very superficial consideration of the subject: for if we review those principles, which the several sects of philosophers have laid down as the foundation of morals, we shall find, not only that piety may be reduced to some one of those heads, but even that there is scarcely one of them under which it may not be comprehended.

Some philosophers maintain, that the essence of virtue consists in acting agreeably to the dictates of Reason and Conscience. Now, what can be more agreeable to these principles than to conform to the situation and circumstances in which we stand to God, to look up to the Source of Wisdom with reverence, to the Fountain of Goodness with love, to the most perfect of all Beings as an object of imitation? The same answer may be given to those, who hold, that virtue consists in aiming at perfection, in acting with decorum, or in conforming to the relations of things: for mankind are universally agreed, that in order to approach *perfection* in any art, science or virtue, it is necessary to have a model, and to select as our pattern that person who has attained the highest degree of excellence in the object of our studies, or even to form an ideal standard greater than any that was ever realized. Where, then, should the moralist look for a model but in God? What can be more agreeable to *decorum* or the *moral fitness of things* than for an accountable being to think and act as in the presence of his Judge; or for a dependent creature to love and revere the Being on whom he depends, and from whom he derives all his enjoyments? What can be more consonant to the relation of things, than that a creature should adore his Creator? One great sect of moralists place virtue in benevolence, and another in an enlarged self-love. But adopt which you will, I ask you what kind of a benevolent system must that be, which excludes the author of life and happiness from the love and gratitude of his creatures, a father from the dutiful and affectionate attachment of his children: and will not even self-love dictate the cultivation and the expression of those devout affections which are due to the Almighty, to a being in whose hands are our life, our breath and all things, whose power is neither limited by duration, nor circumscribed by space; who can render all other beings kind and affectionate to us, and without whose permission no creature can do us any injury?

This view of the subject suggests a very great excellence in this disposition of mind. That the generality of men should trace all their actions and designs to any of these sources, is evidently impossible: that, if they

should attempt it, they would run into very pernicious errors in the conduct of life, can hardly be doubted: because we know, not only that the wisest and best men have differed on such points, and that they have in fact, from very remote antiquity, been the chief subjects of controversy among contending sects of philosophers; but also, that each party has discovered, that many very dangerous positions might be established, if any one of these principles, except its own, were admitted; of course every one of these principles is condemned by a great majority of philosophers, as the sole foundation of morals. Now, a pious disposition will supersede the necessity of this abstract knowledge, and relieve us from this perplexing inquiry. If we have a tolerably just idea of the moral character of the Deity, which most considerate men can easily attain; if we consider him as the witness of all our thoughts, words and deeds; and feel a constant desire to please and imitate him, we shall seldom be at a loss about the fundamental principles of virtue. Few men would err grossly either in their desires or their actions, if they imagined that any virtuous and prudent friend were privy to every suggestion of their minds. How then would it be possible for us to continue in sin, if we conceived, that a Being of unspeakable perfection were intimately present, at all the deliberations that are carried on in our hearts! I need not here enter into any discussion of the moral character of the Deity. Though inquisitive moralists and sceptical metaphysicians may embarrass and perplex this subject, the generality of plain, thoughtful, well-disposed men, are seldom wrong in their conclusions on such points. Neither is it necessary to prove that we live in his presence; for this is one of the first maxims in natural religion as well as revelation. And if these points be admitted, it will readily follow, both that we ought to retain a constant sense of the presence in which we live; and that such an habitual conviction will be superior to a thousand abstract arguments in favour of virtue. So that pity alone is a good general substitute for moral philosophy.

As in this point of view Piety might be shown to be a principle of the greatest importance to the generality of men; so it might easily be made to appear, that it

is one of the most satisfactory, and at the same time most sublime subjects of meditation, to which the most enlightened can addict themselves. Compare the contemplation of the Divine Nature and our relation to it, with the consideration of any other subject, either as to sublimity or moral utility, and you will readily discover what a pre-eminence it possesses. For, to whatever other subject we addict ourselves, we can be occupied only with the *works* of God; but this directs us to God himself.

It is not, however, the design of our maker that we should be engrossed by any speculations, however exalted, nor by any mental exercise, however edifying. We are evidently formed for active life; and the Christian religion continually inculcates on our minds, that the greatest spiritual refinement, the highest flights of the most pious soul, the utmost extent of knowledge, and even a miraculous degree of faith, are nothing, except they produce corresponding effects upon the conduct. This is a language which recommends itself, and the religion by which it is used to every rational and well disposed mind. But as Christianity assures us, that faith without works is dead; so it informs us, that the love of the world is inconsistent with the love of God, that we should seek first for the favour of Heaven, and last for the applause of man: that we should not be so absorbed by worldly pursuits, as to disqualify ourselves for relishing the most sublime and satisfactory food, prepared for our immortal part. This is equally agreeable to reason with the other. What, then, is the result of this state of the subject, equally consonant as it is to reason and revelation? Is it not this? that we should take care so to apportion our time and thoughts, that while we prosecute things temporal, we may not lose sight of things eternal? Instead of rejoicing in every addition to our fortune or our worldly business, whatever it may be, we should accept of it with caution. We should be jealous of every avocation that has a tendency to encroach upon that time, which ought to be devoted to sober thoughts; and every enticement to pleasure that may trespass upon the season allotted to the more calm and noble occupations of the soul. We should consider God as our refuge and our help in time

of trouble. We should flee to him from the folly, the seduction, and persecutions of man. We should learn to consider the various employments of this life, as exercises by which we may improve in the principles of morality and piety; as opportunities of applying and reducing to practice our solitary and contemplative maxims. We should keep in mind the sound wisdom of that text—"Acknowledge him in all thy ways, and he will direct thy paths." We should live in a constant sense of the divine presence, and this very persuasion will prevent us from going astray, and keep before our eyes the pure light of the divine perfections, and it will be a lamp to enlighten our steps. We should consider the Supreme Being, as privy to every secret thought of our souls; and we shall seldom indulge or tolerate any vicious disposition so long as to grow into actual sin. If we give ourselves up to such suggestions, as may arise from a sincere, a simple, an uncontaminated and unmixed regard to the authority of God, and to an imitation of his attributes, we may hope for even higher degrees of spiritual assistance.

As it is essential towards preserving any considerable degree of purity, that we should frequently look up to the pattern of perfection, and transfuse the graces of his character into our own, we are commanded by our Saviour to consider him as our model. "Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect;" and more expressly by the prophets in the name of Jehovah himself, "Be ye holy, for I am holy;"—and as this study must necessarily require time, so both the course of nature and the ordinances of religion are calculated to give us periodical invitations to it. As the glorious exhibition of the morning sun, which restores to the landscape its beautiful hues, and peoples it with the different tribes of animals recalled to life, naturally raises our thoughts to the author of life, to him who is light, in whom there is no darkness at all, and fills the soul with a desire of imitating that bounty which it displays; so the close of evening, when the dark cone of night is silently dropt upon the earth, gradually extinguishing the torch of day, and at length shutting in the wide horizon, disposes us to sober contemplation and a serious review of the use we have made of an irrevocable

day; in like manner the solemn interval between these periods is fitted for communing with our souls. Thus too, various seasons and epochs in our lives, such as the return of summer and winter, seed-time and harvest, the commencement and the termination of the year, and more especially times of sickness and calamity, are well adapted to excite devout sentiments in a well-ordered mind. But the institutions of religion being more immediately provided for that purpose, should be more particularly applied to it. It hath graciously pleased the Almighty to select one day in seven, to be wholly emancipated from the bondage of the world, and as far as human frailty will admit, dedicated to pious uses. The periodical returns of the communion recommend a yet more solemn retrospect of our lives, a more tender recollection of the great Minister of Grace, and a more endearing devotion to our Heavenly Father. These we should consider as stages in the journey of life; resting-places at various distances, adapted to the nature of the road and the refreshments we require. At these we should review our progress, and determine to increase our speed in proportion to what we may have done or left undone; resolving to make the best use of our time, and to proceed with the greater diligence and alacrity, as the time allotted to our journey is abridged. When we arrive at one of these halting places in our spiritual journey, we should examine in what state we are for proceeding to the place of our destination, what contamination we have contracted in the foul roads through which we have travelled, of what errors we have been guilty, what mischances have befallen us, and inquire, how we shall prepare for the remainder of our peregrination, extricate ourselves from the incumbrances which adhere to us, and pursue our pilgrimage with increasing vigour. We should provide "bags which wax not old," such a stock of spiritual nourishment and food for the soul, as may sustain us in health and strength till we shall reach the next stage: and we should all along support our fortitude, confirm our perseverance, and preserve the tranquillity and serenity of our souls, by contemplating the period of our journey, not suffering ourselves to be decoyed or deterred from continuing our course, but

emulating our great pattern and precursor, who has finished his race, and returned to assure us of the reality of that state at which we aim. The only means, by which we can hold on in a steady pace, is by imitating him, having our minds continually occupied with the great object of our journey, looking upon every intermediate incident or casual enjoyment as a mean, not an end, and having our souls perpetually occupied with that glorious Being, with whom we hope to make an eternal abode, in whose house there are many mansions, which Jesus is gone to prepare.

These stated calls to religious exercises are the appointed means of keeping alive this heavenly affection of soul; and as we must be all abundantly sensible, that we are too deficient in spontaneous acts of self-examination and pious meditation, we should gladly and regularly avail ourselves of those gracious invitations, to cultivate a serious and devout turn of mind, to elevate our thoughts so far above this earth, as to be little exposed to those frequent shocks and jolts, to which those are subject, who crawl along the ground—to acquire such a frame of mind as shall be prepared to enjoy every innocent pleasure of life, though but slightly affected by those little vexations, which keep the worldly man in a feverish agitation, fretting away all his enjoyments, and leaving him equally unfit for this life and the life to come. The pious man on the contrary can descend occasionally into the tumult of the world, at the call of duty or the instigation of affection, and having acted his part, can again retire into his secret retreat, the sanctuary of his soul.

If then it be admitted, as I think it must, that piety is a virtue, that it produces a happy temper of mind, and that it supplies the want of philosophical research to those who are incapable of such studies, by directing them in almost every circumstance of life, how does it happen, that the expression of pious sentiments is not universally admitted to be a duty, and is practised with such coldness and reluctance? We are prompted by nature to express all the strong emotions of our souls; we in general feel a painful restraint when debarred from giving vent to our feelings; we reckon it cruel and criminal not to let others see how far we partici-

pate in their joys or sorrows ; and we are unanimously agreed, that little value is to be set upon that man's humane affections, who never performs a humane action, which is the natural expression of humanity. How then can we believe, that that man is actuated by pious affections and heavenly motives, who was never prompted to join in thanksgiving or praise ? Again, it seems to be a law of our nature, that the expression and exercise of any principle is necessary to its support and increase. We know, that if a man were to suppress all his feelings of humanity, friendship, or natural affection, and never let them break out into words or open acts, these principles would be in great danger of decaying ; whereas by giving vent to such emotions, the kind affections gain strength and vigour. Is it not then to be apprehended, that he who never indulges in religious exercises in public or private, will speedily lose those spiritual feelings, which confer such dignity on our nature ? We find too, that habits of neglect are continually gaining strength, as well as habits of action. A person who suppresses the natural expression of any passion, affection, or disposition, grows every day less able and less willing to express it. Thus, men who have neglected to give words to their devout sentiments, or to join the expressions of others, gradually lose the faculty both of expression and of attention. It is further evident, that sympathy is one of the most powerful principles in our constitution. It is common to see a multitude of people seized with fury and enthusiasm, when engaged in any common cause, wrought up into a degree of rage and frenzy by hearing a discourse, or being witness to a transaction, which each of them separately could have heard or beheld almost with indifference. On these accounts our Divine Master, who knew what is in man, prescribed the exercise of devotion as an important part of religious duty ; to prevent this exercise from falling into disuse, he has established certain periods in which it shall be practised ; to give the devout affections the aid of sympathy, he has enjoined, that our devotional duties shall frequently be performed in common, and above all, has invited us to unite in an interesting and sympathetic commemoration of himself ;—and knowing the vast importance

of a deep sense of religion and a pious disposition of mind, he has annexed peculiar blessings to the serious discharge of religious duties. He has, moreover, sanctioned this precept by his example, and furnished us with a model of prayer. What pretences, then, can any man build either on philosophical principles, or sentimental feelings against exercises of devotion? How can any man decline a compliance with the command of God, not only delivered in his word, but founded on the instincts of that nature which he has bestowed upon us, and exemplified in the practice of the messenger of his grace, and the preacher of his divine will.

NEMO.

ELECTION AND REPROBATION.

SIR,—Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, and good will towards men, was the heavenly anthem which was sung at the birth of our blessed Saviour. On the night in which he was betrayed, he bequeathed to his followers his peace, as his last blessing: that is, he enjoined upon them the cultivation of that gentle spirit, that moderate and forbearing disposition, which he had uniformly exemplified in his own conduct, and which would lay the surest foundation for their social intercourse with one another. These considerations conspire to show that harmony of hearts and unity of affections, should prevail among professing Christians. The gospel, which has the blessed God for its original author, and the happiness of the human race for its end, is the only infallible rule of our belief and conduct. Benevolence, mercy, and love to the erring children of men, appear so plain in the Christian volume, that sufficient evidence is given of its heavenly origin, to satisfy the candid enquirer after truth. Melancholy experience proves, that when mankind “turn aside to vain jangling,” and strengthen every dispute by the indulgence of rancour, and the spirit of resentment, their own peace of mind is destroyed, social intercourse embittered, and claim to the character of a sincere Christian, completely lost. The primitive age of the Christian church presents a pleasing picture to the devout observer. Peace and unanimity

prevailed among the believers in the doctrines of the divine Saviour. Observing the command which he gave them "to love one another," they proved by their conduct that they were his friends. Creeds and confessions, religious ceremonies, and forms of worship established by human authority, had not disturbed the peace of that happy period, but the ministers of religion paid strict attention to the command of the Saviour, which enjoined them "to teach all nations,"—"teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Priestcraft and intolerance had not commenced their awful reign among professing Christians, nor did the ministers of religion attempt to legislate for the consciences of one another, but contented themselves with the simple and plain confession "that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." The awful doctrines of particular election and reprobation, had not appeared upon the page of the historian, nor had men who professed religion pronounced sentence of condemnation upon all who differed from them on speculative points of theology.

In a former letter which you were so indulgent as to insert in your useful and valuable publication, I promised to do myself the honour of giving my view of several portions of scripture which, Calvinists imagine, sufficiently prove the awful doctrine of election and reprobation. I hasten to redeem the pledge which I have given.

The gloomy calculation which the supporters of this doctrine usually make is, that few shall obtain eternal happiness. They unfortunately employ a large portion of their time in drawing every character in the darkest shade, representing mankind sunk into the depths of moral depravity, and exceeding former ages in sin and wickedness. It must be granted that there are numbers in the present day profligate in their conduct; but in judging others we seldom do it with candour. Happy would it be for the great number of mankind that they were as severe upon their own conduct as what they are upon those around them. Taking into account the numerous temptations to which the human race is exposed, may not the greater part be better than rigidly righteous persons will have them, who will make no allowances for human infirmity? The great business of

life is to correct our own errors, and not to pass sentence upon our brethren. It doth not become us to set bounds to the terms on which it may please a being of unerring wisdom and unbounded goodness, mercy, and love, to accept the sincere though erring children of men. Instead of confining his favour, whose goodness extends to all creatures, to a certain denomination, sect, or party, in exclusion to the rest, let us entertain more extensive and generous views of the conduct of the Eternal, who is wonderful in working, and whose tender mercies are over all his works. That person deserves no milder name than rash and presumptuous, who passes a promiscuous sentence of eternal condemnation upon all who differ from him upon speculative points of religion. "God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness, will be accepted of him." Contracted must be that man's view of the glorious perfections of the God of all, who imagines a particular denomination of his creatures are his favourites in exclusion of all the rest of the human race. In the Bible, God, who is the righteous judge, has passed no such sentence upon his creatures, and why should erring mortals usurp the judgment-seat of him who will judge righteous judgment, and render unto every man according to the opportunities of information which he has enjoyed, and the means of salvation under which he has been educated. The apostle Paul was an eminent minister of the gospel, and certainly had as great a privilege as any individual of the present day, to decide upon the final doom of all who had not been converted to Christianity, but he candidly acknowledges that this was not his prerogative. "What have I to do to judge them that are without?" that is, those who are not Christians. Christianity gives us no room to look for salvation through any other medium than faith in Jesus Christ; but the Gospel does not warrant us, on that account, to consign all to condemnation who have never seen its light, nor enjoyed its favours. Such we leave to the infinite mercy of God, who may have ways to us unknown, of communicating to them grace sufficient to bring them to eternal happiness. His servants they are as well as we, and to him, their master, they must stand or fall; but whether they stand or fall, our happiness cannot be

affected by it. Instead of sentencing all to eternal misery, who differ from us in religious opinion, let charity, moderation, and forbearance, form our characters. The prevalence of vice in the world is no reason why we should censure all. Men of principle and character are to be found among all denominations, and it is both uncandid and unchristian to censure and abuse every person who, upon every point of religion and morality, has not the same view with ourselves. May there not be the same shades of difference in the human understanding as there are in the human countenance; and how few take exactly the same view of the same subject? Early education has a powerful influence over us, for which charitable allowance should always be made. Many who hold the same faith with ourselves, though mixed with error and superstition, may come to the rational knowledge of "the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent," and to the practice of pure and undefiled religion. To censure and abuse all who differ from us in opinion, to term all reprobates, contaminated with the soul-destroying heresy, who do not hold the same articles of faith with ourselves, is not only uncandid, but unchristian; and every species of persecution, either in word or action, in religion, is not only inconsistent, but in direct opposition to the gentle and forbearing spirit which Jesus, the author and the finisher of our faith, inculcates and enjoins upon all his followers.

The virtuous at present, and the redeemed in future, may be more than are imagined. In the time of the greatest degeneracy among the Jews, numbers remained uncontaminated by the idolatry and licentious practices of the nations with which they were surrounded, which is a good argument that in future many will be accepted by the Great Searcher of the human heart, and strict observer of human conduct, whom the rash and the unthinking term reprobates. In the 19th chapter of 1st Kings, we find the prophet Elijah complaining to his master in the following manner—"Behold—the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword, and I, I only am left;"—a complaint of universal degeneracy and guilt. From the wickedness which the good man saw prevailing, he was disposed to consider himself as

left alone in the service of God, and the practice of pure and undefiled religion. Attend to the answer of the Almighty. "Yet have I left me seven thousand men in Israel that have not bowed the knee to Baal, and lips that have not kissed him." It is hoped in every age of the world it will be so in the sight of the Almighty, and that many are not so criminal as the whispers of malice would make them.

The portions of Scripture which are brought to prove that few will be saved, should be considered with the greatest candour. Christ calls his flock a "little flock," which is applied to his disciples, and those who believed in him when he was on earth. His kingdom arose out of the most obscure and unpromising beginnings, and his followers at first were few in number. In such a manner he addresses them as a small, feeble, unprotected society, as far as depended on worldly circumstances, and he exhorts them not to indulge in melancholy and dejection upon that account, for his dominion, though at that time it was very limited, would one day become very extensive; that providence would guard and support them, and that they need not be dismayed by entering upon the perilous warfare, upon account of the malevolent opposition of their enemies, for in the end they should prove victorious over every obstacle and over every foe.

Our Saviour denominating his disciples a "little flock," implies the inconsiderable progress which his religion made at first in the world, and has no reference whatever to a small number at last obtaining eternal happiness. In general, revelation speaks on this point in the most liberal manner, and we have reason to believe, and to rejoice in the belief, that the number of the redeemed will be great, and that many who at present are disregarded by the world shall join that innumerable company which will celebrate the praises of him who sitteth upon the throne for ever and ever.

When our Saviour declares, that "strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth to life, and few there be that find it;" but that "wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that enter in thereat," it may be observed, that by the gate here which leadeth to life is to be understood

the taking up the Christian profession, and the Christian character, and forming our conduct by its divine laws, which is the only way to eternal happiness, which is promised to Christians. This course of life, in comparison of the ways of the world, its vices, pleasures and licentiousness, is both strait and narrow; or in other words, attended with self-denial and difficulties. But, though the gate which leads to eternal life be always strait, and the way narrow, requiring always sincerity of heart and strict regularity of behaviour, and frequently attended with distress; yet in this respect the expression applied more particularly to the first converts to Christianity.

In that time the believers in Jesus were much straitened; the way to the church was extremely narrow, and the Christian profession was an arduous business, when men had to deny themselves to the profits of the world, and to take up their cross and follow their Saviour. It was a hazardous and forbidding undertaking, on account of the opposition, persecution, and temporal terrors which were held out against it. These no doubt prevented many from entering upon it, and those who had espoused the christian cause were subjected the whole course of their lives to suffering and sorrow. Thanks to God! times and circumstances, under the arrangement of his providence, have experienced a happy change. In these latter days the gate of Christianity is not so strait, the lives of its professors are not so much exposed to danger in espousing the cause of Christ Jesus. In this respect, "his yoke is easy, and his burden is light." We have no tortures to endure in behalf of religion, no outward discouragements to encounter, compared with the primitive christians. As matters stand at present among us, we may say with truth, that in point of the blessings which we enjoy, we have more encouragement to live a religious holy life than a dissolute and profane one. Taking the words of our Saviour in this view, which appears to be the natural meaning, they cannot support the doctrine that few shall enter into eternal life. May we ever view the religion of the blessed Saviour in its most lovely form, holding forth grace and mercy to all sincere believers and penitent

sinners, without exception, and withholding pardon from none but the impenitent and hypocritical professor, who holds the truth in unrighteousness. Eternal happiness shall not be confined to any nation, nor to any sect or party; but all who have been good in time will be happy in eternity. "They shall come from the east and from the west, and from the north and from the south, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven." This view of the vast extent of divine love and acceptance should calm our tempers, correct our severe judgments, and expand our benevolent affections towards all men who are of a different denomination with ourselves in religion. It is the character alone which will determine the final doom of the human race, if we believe that we will be judged according to our works, and if they who differ from us upon speculative opinions have taken pains to be wise and virtuous, we have reason to believe they will meet with his approbation and acceptance, who is no respecter of persons. That individual must have a contracted mind and a niggardly disposition, who would deny his fellow-creature a portion of heaven, who did not see religion in the same way which he did himself, or imagine he could not be happy in such company. In heaven there will be room for us all, and in heaven we will all arrive at last, if in the season of our merciful visitation we cultivate the principles of righteousness, be sincere and upright in the discharge of our duty, and in the proper improvement of the talents which our master hath given us.

As neither envy, discord, nor bad feeling will find admittance into the heavenly mansion, and as we are sojourners to our Father's house, let us not fall out by the way. In his house there are many mansions, and ample room for every sincere and pure heart. Spending our time upon speculative points of theology, which are not plainly taught in divine revelation, only renders our journey unpleasant, and frequently prevents us from attending to the one thing needful.

"Those Christians best deserve the name,
Who studiously make peace their aim."

I have now come to the close of my long letter. Should you think the observations useful, and worth a place in your publication, I will send you another in which I will endeavour to shew, that the doctrine of *particular election* and *reprobation* is inconsistent with the spirit of genuine Christianity.

In the meantime I remain yours,

ANN.

CAUSES OF INFIDELITY.

(*From the Gospel Anchor, America.*)

THE present is emphatically an age of inquiry.—The extensive prevalence of the arts and sciences, has aroused the energies of the human mind, from their long and dormant slumbers, beneath the dark shades of superstition, and the keen eye of inquisitive research is abroad in the earth. We rejoice that it is so: it speaks well for the cause of truth. We have no fears that the rocks of immutable truth will be battered in pieces by investigation.

It fills us with the purest sensations of joy, to behold the triumphant march of intellect, while heathen superstitions and popish abominations, crumble to the dust before her approaching step.—We rejoice to see Christianity divesting herself the traditions of men, and beginning to disclose to a wondering world, all her pristine glory and immaculate purity. We earnestly pray that the redeeming spirit of inquiry, which is abroad in the earth, may go on and prosper, till the Gospel of Jesus Christ shall be stripped of those foul garments, in which it has long appeared—its utility and beauty be seen by all, and its heart-cheering truths reach every heart. Let men continue to investigate, reason, ponder, and reflect, and we doubt not the time will arrive when our prayer shall be realized.

But while we rejoice that men are beginning to inquire and think for themselves, we fear that in many instances, these inquiries will not be directed to the right subjects, in relation to Christianity.—Our fear is, that many in their zeal to rid themselves of those injurious errors which have been imposed upon them, under the name of Christianity, will not discriminate between

that which is real, and the spurious. But without directing an inquiry to this subject, confound Christianity with those palpable absurdities which pass as such among men, and so throw the whole overboard together.

Deceive a man once, and let him discover the deception, and you will not easily persuade him that any thing can be true which comes under the name of that by which he was deceived at first. Hence it is that many who have had childish fables imposed upon them as the pure gospel of Jesus Christ, when they began to investigate things for themselves, have rejected every thing that bears the name of Christianity, without faithfully examining whether these fables were taught by Jesus Christ. This part of the subject they have taken for granted, upon general consent. It becomes then a duty indispensably incumbent on every Christian, faithfully to examine his faith—try it in the furnace of truth, and see that it contains nothing which is contrary to the teachings of Christ, lest the cause of our master be wounded in the house of his friends. It also becomes the duty of every man, before he concludes that Christianity is false, to direct his inquiries to this subject, and learn what Christianity is, in reality, before he counts the blood of the covenant an unholy thing. A want of discrimination, in this particular, has caused thousands to cast away the Gospel, who, had they known the true nature of its doctrines, would have embraced it with all the ardor of a Paul.

We have rarely conversed with an unbeliever in the gospel, whose objections to that system of religious faith, were not mainly founded upon false views of its doctrines. They have mistaken the popular doctrines of the day, for the gospel, and have, with good reason too, called them a mass of contradictions, which never could come from a God of truth. Hence they have rejected the Bible as a fable. Now, if these same men had investigated the subject fully, and seen the pure gospel of Jesus as it is, unveiled and unpervverted by the revolting lights and blasphemous misrepresentations under which it is presented, they would have clung to it as the only light that dawns upon the darkness of the grave.

Let Christians then cleanse their creeds, preach Jesus instead of themselves, *his* doctrines instead of their own abominations, and infidelity will hide her head in shame and confusion. We profess to be the advocates of the gospel of Christ; we regard it as a system of religion, based on the immortal principles of truth, holiness, justice, and benevolence, and fraught with innumerable blessings to the world. Our "Anchor," as we trust, is fastened on a rock, and our endeavour shall be that it may hold the gospel ship secure against the storms and winds of infidelity and error. We hear much complaint about the prevalence of infidelity, in our day, but for ourselves, we wonder that there are not ten infidels where there is one. Not because we have an idea that there are good and sufficient reasons for rejecting the genuine gospel of Jesus Christ—we rejoice in the belief that it contains in itself that intrinsic excellence, and is supported by that clear testimony that is calculated to commend it to every man's conscience, as the richest boon that God in his wisdom has bestowed upon man—but when we remember how the "gold has become dim, and the most fine gold changed"—when we look at the heterogeneous mass of contradictions and abominations that passes among men for Christianity, we wonder at that strange infatuation which induces men to believe they could come from a God of truth and holiness. Hence when we see the mass of community honestly supposing that the Bible sanctions these conflicting principles, we wonder that they do not spurn it from them, as unworthy the belief of any man. Many have done it; and many more will follow their example, unless they shall soon find that these doctrines are not taught in the Scriptures, and embrace more rational and consistent views of the doctrines of the Gospel.

We have long been of the opinion, that the primary causes of infidelity, were to be traced, not to any want of harmony or consistency in the doctrines of the gospel, nor to any lack of evidence in relation to its authenticity, but to those absurd and contradictory doctrines which have been mingled with it, in its promulgation. Christianity, we believe, is supported by a mass of evidence that, in any other case, would be regarded as overwhelming. But alas! it is presented to

the world, loaded and defiled with gross corruptions and foul abominations. From a minute examination of the subject, we are fully convinced that these corruptions do more to injure the gospel, than all the infidel writings in existence ever have done, or ever will do. We are more and more thoroughly convinced every day of our lives, that the time is not far distant, when men will embrace more liberal and rational views of Christianity, or an overwhelming flood of infidelity will deluge the earth. Men in this age of literature, science, and investigation, will not long continue to swallow absolute contradictions, and libellous aspersions of the character of nature's God, and say they come from God, because they are handed out as such truths, from the desk. There is too much good sense and reason in community, to be always gulled in this manner.

The crafty hypocrite and the canting Pharisee, may stigmatize Universalism as a damnable heresy and the devil's doctrine, as much as they please, we declare it as our sober conviction, that it is the only redeeming angel that can save Christianity from dissolution in these United States. It is the only doctrine that can save the people from infidelity, and the only ground on which the Scriptures can be defended. We will venture the prediction, that fifty years from this time, will see the mass of community either infidels or Universalists. If Universalism does not continue them in Christianity, they will go over to infidelity. These being our views of the subject, as we love the cause of Christ, our persevering endeavours are made to tear off the veil from the face of the gospel, expose corruptions, which exist in the creeds of men, and inculcate what we deem to be the only rational and correct views of Scripture.

We intend, in a few subsequent and brief articles, as time and opportunity shall offer, to point out a few doctrines whose legitimate tendency, is to induce men to reject the doctrines of the cross. W.

(From the same.)

Our readers will recollect, that we published an article in the last number of the "Anchor," under the above caption, in which we gave it as our opinion, that the absurd doctrines which are propagated under the name of Christianity, might be ranked among the most effi-

cient causes of infidelity, and that the benign doctrine of impartial grace and Universal Salvation, is the only redeeming angel which can save Christianity from dissolution. We promised our readers, that we would bestow some further attention upon the subject, by noticing some doctrines to which we particularly referred.

We commence with the doctrine of the Trinity, as pre-eminently calculated to produce unbelief in the Christian religion. To be told that there are three distinct and separate persons in one God, and each of them verily and essentially the eternal God, the Son as old as the Father, and the Holy Ghost as old as either, and yet that there is but one God, is so diametrically opposed to all that is reasonable, that we cease to wonder men throw away the Bible, if they must believe it contains such nonsense as this, and be obliged in consequence, to swallow such a mass of contradictions, as divine truth. It has been justly observed, that "nothing unreasonable or false can proceed from a God of infinite wisdom and truth." Now we do contend that the position involved in this doctrine, that three is one, and one three, is so manifestly unreasonable and false too, that it cannot be a matter of revelation; and a reasonable man who supposes the Bible to teach such absurdities, will reject it altogether, viewing it as a gross libel on the character of nature's God, to make him the author of a book containing such child-like contradictions. Let a man be told that the Bible reveals this doctrine, and that the whole superstructure of the Christian religion is based on the supposition that three Gods are one God, and that he is commanded, on pain of eternal perdition, to believe this as truth, and certainly, if the man has common sense, and uses it on the occasion, he will say it cannot be so. An all-wise and perfect being cannot reveal to his children, things that outrage every principle of that reason which he has given them, and which constitutes the only means they have of distinguishing between truth and falsehood.

We will illustrate this subject by a familiar simile. A man presents you with a book upon the science of mathematics, and informs you that it is the production of a man who is extensively and deeply acquainted with the science. He tells you, however, that you will find it laid

down in the book, as a fundamental principle, that the two sides of a triangle are no more than equal to the base, and the base is just equal to the two sides. He further informs you, that he cannot explain this, it is an incomprehensible mystery, and yet the whole work is founded upon this principle—it runs through the whole, and is recognized in every problem. Now you could not be induced by any arguments, however plausible they might be, that this work could be the production of a man who had the least knowledge of mathematics. Even if you were shown the hand-writing, and were told the name of the man, you would say it was a piece of deception.

Now, men are not fools, and they will find it out by and by. Here we are told of a God of infinite wisdom and truth—one who is the fountain of all reason and the source of all intelligence, and all nature unites in support of these assertions; but we are presented with a book, claiming to be a revelation of truth from such a God, and are informed in the outset, that the leading principle in this book is this, that there are three distinct persons, each of them an eternal God, and yet there is but one God. And though this is a mystery, yet we must believe it true, and that it constitutes the foundation of all that is revealed besides. What, we ask, must be the legitimate effect of such things? Simply to cause every sober-minded, reflecting man, to believe the book itself never originated with a God of reason or truth. In the case we have supposed, if you took the word of the man who presented you with the book, in relation to its character, you would reject it as a weak attempt at imposition; but if you examined the work for yourself, you might find that your friend was mistaken, and that it was a genuine and authentic work. So in this case, if we take it for granted that the Bible teaches the absurd notion of three Gods in one, we shall reject it; but if we examine for ourselves, we may find that we have been misinformed in relation to the nature of the truths revealed. We may find that it reveals *one God*, instead of three; and that *one God* of such a character as is consistent with the works of nature. In this case we shall receive it as a “lamp to our feet and a light to our path.”

But when we reflect that men are little inclined to search the scriptures for themselves, in order to learn what doctrines they teach, and that the mysterious doctrine of the Trinity is intimately connected, in the minds of most people, with Christianity—that even in childhood they are taught to regard it as a holy thing, upon which the gospel is founded—and that Christianity and the Trinity, are in their minds always associated and blended together—when all these are taken into the account, we shall cease to wonder that men in after life, do not discriminate between them, but in the investigation of one, finding it rotten at the core, throw the other away with it, and let the whole go together. Thus incalculable injury is done the cause of Christ. W.

(From the same.)

In our last article under this caption, we commented on the doctrine of the Trinity, which we considered as peculiarly calculated to produce unbelief in the scriptures. In this article we shall invite the attention of the reader, to another doctrine, intimately connected with the one above-named, and equally deleterious in its influences on the causes of genuine Christianity. We refer to the doctrine of vicarious atonement. This is defined by Buck, in his Theological Dictionary, as follows: “The satisfying Divine Justice, by Jesus Christ giving himself a ransom for us; undergoing the penalty due to our sins, and thereby releasing us from that punishment which God might justly inflict on us.”

When a book is presented to us, claiming to be a revelation of truth, from a God of immaculate purity and justice, we have a right to expect that its doctrines will harmonize with the principles of common justice; and if they do not thus harmonize, it is a good and sufficient reason for saying that the system which contains them, never came from a God of justice. Now it requires but a minute's reflection and a small share of reason, to show any man that the doctrine under consideration, represents God, not only as disregarding the common laws of right, but as trampling under foot those immutable principles of justice and equity, which are the “same yesterday, to-day, and forever.” What is justice? It is that external principle of right, which

gives to every man, and every being, that which properly belongs to him. To whom does the punishment for sin properly belong? Surely it belongs to the sinner. Where, then, we ask, is the justice, and where the right, in taking the punishment from the sinner, to whom it belongs, and inflicting it on the innocent? There is no justice in such a course of procedure. On the contrary, it is eternally at war with every thing that bears the name; and the man who thinks and reasons for himself, will consider it a foul libel on the character of God, to say that he so utterly disregards every principle of justice and right.

Yet the common doctrine of atonement, not only represents God as permitting those who transgress, to escape all punishment, but as pouring out wrath and vengeance without mixture, on his own innocent son. We have heard of savages, who would drink the heart's blood of an innocent child, for the sin of its father; but we never heard any man contend that there was any justice in it. And yet we hear men talk of God's justice, in the same breath that they tell us he inflicted on his son, the punishment due to our sins.

We promised our readers that these articles should be short. And we have only to observe that a man who believes the Bible to teach a doctrine which sinks the character of God, as a just and righteous ruler, even below the savage of the wilderness, will be very likely to say it cannot be true. Whether this is correct reasoning or not, one thing is certain, and that is, that men do reason after this manner. We appeal to the writings of modern infidels, in proof of what we now assert; and we soberly ask every man who has read them, if he has not found this doctrine one of the principal objections to Christianity. We would that they had known it to be as far from the truth of the Gospel, as the east is from the west.

W.

INFANT DAMNATION STILL PREACHED.

(From the Bible Anchor.)

A Calvinistic Clergyman in this region, while performing the funeral services of a child about two years of age, recently addressed the parents of the deceased, in the following soul-appalling and heart-rending language.

"I can afford you no comfort. It has been and is still the opinion of some divines, that there are infants in hell not a span long; and yours was more than a span long. I know that many now believe that all infants will be saved, but *my* bible does not teach me that doctrine."

Here we have the fact clearly stated, that this most abhorrent of all tenets ever invented by man, has been, and still is an article of faith held by some who claim the title of Christian divines;—and yet there are many who still follow in the wake of Calvinism, who roundly deny that Calvin, or any of his disciples, ever advanced the doctrine of *infant damnation*. Although they may have just cause to feel the blush of shame crimson on their cheeks, and the upbraidings of a guilty conscience, when they contemplate the fact that this cruel and God-dishonouring sentiment has been promulgated in our world, by those who have claimed to be the followers of him who took children in his arms, blessed them and said, "of such is the kingdom of heaven;" yet we may well question the *integrity* of those who now affect an utter denial of the fact that the doctrine was ever preached, or defended, or made an article of christian faith.

Callous indeed must be the heart, and dead to every generous feeling, the soul of that man, who could, as in the above-cited case, sport with the feelings of surviving parents, and thus plunge a dagger in the heart that is already bursting with grief—who could look upon lovely innocence, reclining on the bosom of maternal affection, and cherish the cold and unfeeling sentiment that such an object is destined to be the monument of eternal wrath, and the sport of malevolent and capricious demons for ever. To all such believers I would say, "He that hates music and the smiles of an infant, let him keep at least three paces from my door."—K. H.

BALLYMONEY PRESBYTERIANS.

It is an old custom in Ireland and other countries, to put inscriptions or other characteristic signs on houses erected for public worship, that the intention of the founders may be known, and that travellers and strangers may with more ease be able to find out the churches which they prefer. Thus, the Established Church of this country is easily known by its lofty spire, and the Roman Catholic chapel by its conspicuous cross. The Methodists and other denominations of Protestant Dissenters, have also their peculiar mode of advertising without, what may be expected within.

The Presbyterians of Ballymoney, considering themselves at liberty in olden times to judge for themselves, did, in the year 1777, select very appropriate mottos for their meeting-house, which are still legible, and which are no way ambiguous. That your readers may know what these mottos are, I send them for insertion in your useful publication. On the front of the Rev. Mr. Park's meeting-house, which is now in a certain sense the property of the General Synod of Ulster, is the following inscription.

"The foundation of virtue is truth, and the foundation of happiness virtue. Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart. The true worshippers shall worship the FATHER in spirit and in Truth.—1777."

As Mr. Park and his people have departed from the worship which these mottos inculcate, I would recommend them to sell the stone, on which they are engraved to the Remonstrant congregation, and put up the *Test, and Overtures* of the General Synod of Ulster. They must, upon reflection, perceive, that they are exhibiting false colours, by which their travelling friends may go past them, and for which their Bible Christian neighbours must pity them. If the inside of the platter be clean, they are bound in duty and consistency to make the outside correspond.

A PROTESTANT DISSENTER.

Extracted from an excellent little work, entitled, "Moral and Religious Sentiments, inculcated by means of Exercises in Writing, selected from the scriptures and various authors ; and designed for the use of Unitarian Sunday Schools, and the Young people of the Unitarian denomination."

PART I.

Man's Chief Interest.—No. 1.

FEAR God, and keep his commandments ; for this is the whole of man. Eccles. xii. 13.

The work of righteousness shall be peace ; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. Isa. xxxii, 17.

To him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward. Prov. xi. 18.

Questions.—No. 1.

Q. What is the whole of man, or the whole duty of man ?

A. To fear God, and keep his commandments.

Q. What is the work of righteousness ?

A. Peace.

Q. What is the effect of righteousness ?

A. Quietness and assurance for ever.

Q. What will be to him that worketh righteousness ?

A. A sure reward.

Man's Chief Interest.—No. 2. Part I.

Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom ; and to depart from evil, is understanding. Job. xxviii. 28.

One thing is needful : and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her. Luke x. 42.

Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. 1 Tim. iv. 8.

Questions.—No. 2.

Q. What is said to be wisdom ?

A. The fear of the Lord.

Q. What is said to be understanding ?

A. To depart from evil.

Q. What does Jesus Christ call religion, or the one thing needful ?

A. The good part.

Q. If we make choice of it with the same sincerity and devotedness as Mary did, how long will it be secured to us ?

A. It will never be taken away from us.

Q. What is the value or importance of godliness ?

A. It is profitable unto all things.

Q. Why is it said to be so ?

A. Because it hath the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

Reason in Religion.—No. 3. Part I.

Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord. Isa. i. 18.

Stand still, that I may reason with you before the Lord, of all the righteous acts of the Lord. 1 Sam. xii. 7.

Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right ? Luke xii. 57.

I speak as unto wise men, judge ye what I say. 1 Cor. x. 15.

Prove all things. 1 Thes. v. 21.

Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. Rom. xii. 1.

Questions.—No. 3.

Q. What does the Almighty by the prophet Isaiah, exhort the people to do ?

A. To come and reason together, or to come and reason with him.

Q. What does the prophet Samuel exhort the people to do ?

A. To stand still, that he may reason with them before the Lord, of all the righteous acts of the Lord.

Q. Why does Jesus Christ in Luke xii. 57, reprove the people ?

A. Because they do not judge for themselves what is right.

Q. What does the apostle Paul exhort us to judge and to prove ?

A. To judge what he says, and to prove all things.

Q. What does he call the living sacrifice, which we are to present unto God ?

A. Our reasonable service.

Reason in Religion.—No. 4, Part I.

Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures. Acts xvii. 2.

And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath day. Acts xviii. 4.

And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled. Acts xxiv. 25.

Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear. 1 Peter iii. 15.

Questions.—No. 4.

Q. What is said to be the manner or practice of Paul in his preaching?

A. To reason out of the Scriptures.

Q. How often is he said to have reasoned in the synagogue?

A. Every sabbath day.

Q. What did Paul do before Felix?

A. He reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come.

Q. What does the apostle Peter exhort us to do?

A. To be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh us a reason of the hope that is in us.

Q. How are we to do so?

A. With meekness and fear, or in the spirit of charity, and with modesty.

The Existence of God.—No. 5, Part I.

The heavens declare the glory of God: and the firmament sheweth his handiwork. Psal. xix. 1.

The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead. Rom. i. 20.

He left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness. Acts xiv. 17.

Questions.—No. 5.

Q. What do the heavens, or the sun, moon, and stars, declare?

A. The glory of God.

Q. What does the firmament, or the sky, in which the sun, moon, and stars are placed, show?

A. His handy-work.

Q. What is meant by the invisible things of God?

A. His power and Godhead.

Q. How are they seen and understood?

A. From the things that are made.

Q. How did God never leave himself without witness?

A. In that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

The Nature of God.—No. 6. Part I.

To whom will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him? Isa. xl. 18.

God is a spirit. John iv. 24.

No man hath seen God at any time. John i. 18.

The King eternal, immortal, invisible. 1 Tim. i. 17.

Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see, 1 Tim. vi. 16.

Intelligence.

NEW REMONSTRANT CONGREGATION.

THE following document was presented to the Remonstrant Presbytery of Bangor, at their last stated meeting.

“ TO THE REV. THE REMONSTRANT PRESBYTERY OF BANGOR, TO MEET AT BALLEE, ON WEDNESDAY THE 22^d OF MAY, 1833 :—

The Memorial of a number of individuals, who reside in the parish of St. Andrews, and adjoining parishes, Ards,

Respectfully Sheweth,

That memorialists deeply deplore the alarming extent, to which the General Synod of Ulster has carried *human authority* in the Church of Christ. From the *Overtures* recently passed by that Body it appears, that with them the Holy Scriptures are no longer confided in as a sufficient rule of faith and practice, and that Congregations have no longer the privilege of choosing such ministers as they may approve of, but are confined to such candidates as must bind themselves to *teach for doctrines the commandments of men*.

Memorialists rejoice in the dignified defence made by the Remonstrant ministers and elders against the tyranny of the General Synod of Ulster, and also in the separation which has been effected from a body of men, among whom the all-sufficiency of the Holy Bible, as a standard of belief and practice, has been virtually denied; among whom the liberty of congregations to elect their own pastors has been, in a great measure, taken away; and among whom ministers are liable to suffer punishment, for the exercise of the right of private judgment in matters of faith.

Memorialists having resolved to form themselves into a Christian Society, upon the great principles, that JESUS CHRIST is the *only*

king and head of the Christian church;—that belief in the Holy Scriptures is the great bond of union which ought to be required among his disciples, and the only test which can be taken by any consistent Protestant;—and that all congregations should enjoy the privilege of exercising their own judgment in the choice of ministers, do supplicate your Rev. Presbytery to grant them preaching on the Lord's Day as often as convenient.

They beg leave to state, that a site has been obtained from John Reid Allen, Esq. of Mount-Panther, for a Meeting-house, in the townland of Ballyhemlin, and that liberal subscriptions have been already made towards defraying the expense of building.

Memorialists appoint Messrs. Robert Miller, sen. and Robert Miller, jun. to act as their Commissioners, and to give such additional information as in their power to the Presbytery.

Signed on behalf of Memorialists this 19th day of May, 1853—

ALEX. ALLEN,
ROBERT SHAW,
JAMES ALLEN,
JOHN RANKIN,
HENRY M'COLLOUGH,
WILLIAM M'KELVEY."

We have heard from good authority, that the prayer of this truly excellent memorial was granted by the Presbytery; and we are fully persuaded, that as congregations, under the care of the General Synod of Ulster, come to a knowledge of the bondage in which they are held by their spiritual rulers, they will feel, that "no man can serve two masters," that "one is their master, even Christ," and that "the Bible, and the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants."

EDITORS.

SETTLEMENT OF MINISTERS.

The Rev. James Orr, a licentiate of the Remonstrant Synod of Ulster, has accepted an unanimous call from the Congregation of Clonmel, in connexion with the Synod of Munster.

The Rev. Wm. Smyth, formerly of the Remonstrant Synod, and latterly minister of the Unitarian Congregation, Dundee, has accepted the pastoral charge of the Second Unitarian Congregation, Bolton, Lancashire.

The Rev. James Yates, the learned opponent of the Rev. Dr. Wardlaw, in the Trinitarian controversy, has been chosen pastor of the Carter-lane Congregation, London, formerly under the charge of the Rev. J. Scott Porter, now one of the ministers of the first Presbyterian Congregation, Belfast.

REMONSTRANT PRESBYTERY OF BANGOR.

The Remonstrant Presbytery of Bangor were entertained at dinner, on the 22d ultimo, by the Congregation of Ballee. The party was very respectable, and consisted of fifty-eight gentlemen:—The Rev D. Whyte was in the Chair, and the Messrs Gracey officiated as Croupiers.

THE
Bible Christian.

No. VI.

JULY, 1833.

VOL. IV.

[FOR THE BIBLE CHRISTIAN.]

RUTH.*

THE book of Ruth is probably indebted for its insertion in the canon of Scripture to the pedigree at its close, which traces the descent of David, and consequently of the Messiah, from Judah, in the third generation from Abraham. To every person of good taste and moral sensibility, it is recommended by an interesting example of female friendship and an elegant description of the occupations and manners of rural life.

In Judea, where no man possessed more land than was necessary for his own subsistence, a partial famine was no uncommon occurrence, since the deficiency of one district could not be supplied by the abundance of another. In consequence of one of these years of scarcity, Elimelech, with his wife and two sons, emigrated from Bethlehem to the land of Moab, where he died; and Naomi his wife was left and her two sons. "And they took them wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth;" and they dwelled there about ten years, and they died also. And Naomi arose with her daughters-in-law, that she might return from the country of Moab; for she had heard how that the Lord had visited his people in giving them bread. Wherefore, she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters-in-law with her, and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah;

"And Naomi said unto her two daughters-in-law, Go, return each to her mother's house; the Lord deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. The Lord grant you that you may find rest each of you in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them; and they lifted up their voice and wept.

* For Joshua and the Judges, see p. 195.

And they said unto her, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people. And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters; why will you go with me?—nay, my daughters; for it grieveth me much for your sake, that the hand of the Lord is gone out against me. And they lifted up their voice and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clave unto her. And she said, Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people; return thou after thy sister-in-law. And Ruth said, intreat me not to leave thee, or return from following after thee; for whither thou goest I will go; and where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. Where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried.—When she saw that she was stedfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her. So the two went until they came to Bethlehem.” The interview between these amiable women I have transcribed at large, for the passage will neither admit of abridgment nor embellishment.

Such an affectionate and disinterested union among three persons so circumstanced, is not, I believe, recorded in history, sacred or civil, and is I suspect rarely met with in modern society.

As Naomi had been driven from her home, and spent ten years in a strange and inhospitable land, she must have returned to Bethlehem in a very destitute condition; but from the nature of the Hebrew constitution, she was set down in the midst of her kindred. Among these was Boaz, “a mighty man of wealth,” who was then employed in cutting down his barley harvest. Naomi and her daughter-in-law being forced by necessity or moved by the speculative foresight natural to women in such cases, agreed, that Ruth should join the gleaners who followed the reapers; to this privilege she was entitled by the law of Moses: “When ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest—thou shalt leave them for the poor and the stranger.” “And she went and came, and gleaned in the field after the reapers; *and her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz*, who was of the kindred of Elimelech. And behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said,—the Lord be with you. And they

answered him, The Lord bless thee. Then said Boaz, (struck, perhaps, with her personal appearance,) Whose damsel is this? And the servant that was set over the reapers, answered and said, It is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab.—Then said Boaz unto Ruth, hearest thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens.—Have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee? and when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels, and drink of that which the young men have drawn. Then she fell on her face and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldst take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?”

“And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath fully been showed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother-in-law since the death of thine husband—the Lord recompense thy work. Then she said, Let me find favour in thy sight, my Lord; for that thou hast comforted me, and for that thou hast spoken friendly unto thine handmaid, though I be not like unto one of thine handmaids. And Boaz said unto her, At meal-time come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar. And she sat beside the reapers, and he reached her parched corn, and she did eat and was sufficed, and left. And when she was risen up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, Let her glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her not: And let fall also some of the handfuls on purpose for her; and leave them that she may glean them, and rebuke her not. So she gleaned in the field until even, and beat out what she had gleaned, and took it up and went into the city.”

The repeated attentions and endearing conversations of Boaz were not thrown away upon the young widow or her mother-in-law; for they immediately agreed upon a plan wholly irreconcilable, indeed, with our ideas of delicacy and prudence, but calculated to bring him to a declaration, and the whole affair to a speedy issue. Accordingly every thing was soon settled between Boaz and Ruth; but there still remained a bar to their union. By the law of Moses, Deut. xxv. 5, &c. her husband's

nearest relative was bound, if required, to take her to wife, and it appeared that there was one nearer than Boaz, if he claimed his right, her match with Boaz could not take place; Boaz, therefore, said unto her, "My daughter, fear not; I will do to thee all that thou requirest.—It is true that I am thy near kinsman; howbeit there is a kinsman nearer than I:—if he will perform unto thee the part of a kinsman, well; let him do the kinsman's part: but if he will not,—then will I. Then went Boaz up to the gate of the city, and sat him down there; and behold, the kinsman of whom Boaz spake came by; unto whom he said, Ho, such a one turn aside; sit down here. And he turned aside, and sat down: And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, Sit ye down here, and they sat down."

In those times the courts of justice were held at the gates of the towns, and these ten elders were the judges. To them Boaz stated the case, and the kinsman having waved his right, "Boaz said unto the elders and unto all the people, ye are witnesses this day, that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's.—Moreover, Ruth, the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife; to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren and from the gate of his place: ye are witnesses this day. And all the people that were in the gate, and the elders said, we are witnesses."—So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife,—and she bare a son, and the woman called his name Obed: he is the father of Jesse, the father of David.

There is a wide difference between this process and the directions in the law. The nearest of kin, who should reject the claim of the widow, is there subjected to personal insult, and a degree of infamy is attached even to his house; but here the proceeding partakes of the nature of a civil transaction and a legal fiction. Boaz calls the nearest of kin into court, and demands whether he will purchase the land belonging to the family of Naomi, and take Ruth to wife. On his refusal Boaz takes the purchase upon himself, and the other signifies his consent by taking off his shoe, and delivering it to Boaz. The elders and the people are then called upon to witness the transaction.

This is one of those injunctions in the law which appear strange to us, but are intimately connected with the objects of the Mosaical constitution, namely, to provide against the intermixture of tribes and the extinction of families. An heiress was obliged to marry in her own tribe; for otherwise the families would be confounded and her land would be alienated, and the nearest of kin was bound to marry the childless widow of his relation, "that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place; for her first-born which she beareth shall succeed in the name of the dead, that his name be not put out of Israel." Her first-born was to take the name of her first husband; the family would then be at least nominally perpetuated, and no blank would appear in the pedigrees of the tribe.

Beside, Naomi, Ruth and Orpah, there are few widows mentioned with distinction in the Old Testament; and in the New, the Prophetess Anna is the only one mentioned expressly by name, but widows in general are often spoken of with respect as valuable members of the church. It is also probable that those companies of pious and devout women, which are mentioned in the Christian Scriptures, were for the most part widows. Lydia of Thyatira, who was converted by the preaching of Paul, and was baptized with all her household, and Dorcas, who was restored to life by Peter, and had been full of good works and almsdeeds which she did, and who had employed herself like many ladies of the present day, in making coats and garments for the poor, which were exhibited by the widows to Peter, were also widows, as there is no mention made of their husbands; and I presume they were not living, for they could not be included in the households of their wives.

Piety is indeed the most becoming quality in every period of female life.* It is the bond and clasp of the female virtues, their ornament and their defence. Like those jewels with which women formerly united their external apparel, it should be worn next the heart, attract without soliciting the respect of the beholders, and, without constraining, arrange in graceful order their sentiments and their manners.

* For a paper on female piety see vol. 3. 97.

Piety is essential to the purity and permanence of youthful innocence, and to the respectability of single life in every period. It is the highest duty and decoration of the conjugal state; the cement of the matrimonial union; the consolation of domestic cares; a support under injury and calamity, slight and oppression; a healing balm for those grievous wounds of the spirit, which dissolve one by one the various relations of the matrimonial state; and lastly, the true support, security and dignity of widowhood. "Let widows trust in the Lord."

The dreary and melancholy void, which is made by the final dissolution of the conjugal union, in the dwelling and the heart, in every haunt of pleasure and every scene of duty, is one of those misfortunes, which we are incapable of anticipating; and is therefore felt, even by the most insensible, with the accumulated weight of an unforeseen catastrophe; for, as it partakes of that inevitable necessity and certainty in event, by which every stroke of mortality is distinguished, so is it attended with the same contingency and uncertainty in point of time; and it also participates of an additional uncertainty as to the priority of dissolution.

This uncertainty of survivorship represses those idle and wicked hopes of Independence on the one hand, and those vain fears of being deserted by a beloved companion on the other; which, if indulged, would dissolve the affection and embitter the life of both. It checks the presumptuous expectation of continued prosperity in the conjugal state; and quells the secret repinings and discontented speculations, often excited by momentary chagrin. It confirms that useful lesson, which we learn from nature, to acquiesce and be contented with what is in its nature inevitable, or at least independent of our control. This principle of our nature, combined with the power of habit, renders matrimony a blessing, and widowhood a misfortune, even to those who have been least congenial in their dispositions, or harmonious in their lives.

Even here, the afflicting and softening process of a lingering illness will mollify, or the shock of sudden death will rend the most obdurate heart; and the final separation will be followed by many a tender and many

a distressing recollection, to which the mind had been insensible before. Then will every instance of insensibility or neglect,—every tender accost, and every unkind or ungracious return crowd upon the conscious mind. 'Tis then that the real worth of the deceased will be duly estimated; and that the survivor will recal to mind, with sentiments of gratitude, which she can never now make known, his various tokens of affection, and those toilsome and anxious days, which perhaps abridged his life, to gain a fortune, for her to enjoy alone. How will she vainly wish for an opportunity to testify her gratitude and love! How bitterly regret the chilling reception, she has so often given him, when oppressed with lassitude of body and mind, and weighed down with cares, by which he forbore to disturb the peaceful tenor and secure enjoyments of her domestic life. How happy she, who has laid no foundation for such self-reproach!

Far different are the feelings of the affectionate and pious wife, conscious of having comforted her partner in his afflictions, dispelled his gloomy cares, supported his virtue and invigorated his courage in seasons of trial, taking sweet and pious counsel together with him, accompanied him to the house of God, been the helper of his faith, hope and joy! and after receiving his farewell look of affection, closed his eyes to open next on realms of everlasting peace! where, if any thing earthly, her image will occupy his mind.

In the early ages of the world, the condition of a widow was desolate and destitute to the last degree. The Jewish Scriptures accordingly abound with injunctions not to injure or oppress the widows or fatherless, or those who have none to help them. The state of a widow is there a proverbial expression to describe every thing that is wretched and forlorn; and accordingly the prophets abound with imprecations and denunciations of divine wrath on those who despise, defraud or wrong her. In like manner, pious widows were objects of peculiar care in the Apostolic churches, both in the distribution of charity, and in respectful treatment. "Honour widows, that are widows indeed;" who have no children to support them, and are altogether desolate.

'Tis true, that the establishment of the Christian religion, and the consequent prevalence of truer notions of

humanity and equity have effected a remarkable change in their condition; but still it is attended with many privations, and distresses, which call for the exercise of fervent and rational piety.

In the lower and middle classes of society, the subsistence of a family generally depends on the life of the husband; and in those instances, where this is not absolutely the case, his death is followed by the loss of many comforts, by a sensible degradation in the scale of society, and often by a long train of embarrassments. Those who live in a state of comparative splendour, are often reduced, by the same event, to a mortifying condition of poverty and dependence; and there are numberless inconveniences and trials, in which the most opulent families participate with their inferiors, which are sensibly alleviated to the religious mind; and many difficulties which can be surmounted with dignity, only by the exercise of that wisdom which is from above. In the simple story of the woman at Nain, it is not for nought we are told that she was a widow. This single word implies, that she had lost her principal support and helpmate; was following her remaining one to the grave and had no hope of another, "for she was a widow."

The melancholy circumstances attendant on Death, the afflicting preparations for the funeral pomp, the waste and comfortless vacuity of the deserted mansion, the constant recurrence of tender and painful remembrances, the sorrow, and yet more affecting insensibility of innocent children, ignorant of their misfortune, amused with the gaudes of the funeral procession, delighted with their own emblems of mourning, added to their distressing curiosity and affecting inquiries, are interrupted by cares and business, to which the female mind has been as yet a stranger. Now, for the first time, are felt perplexity and indecision of mind, want of consultation, advice and even direction, the first fruits of an unhappy independence. Then succeed an anxious investigation of the means of future support, change of residence and condition, disputed property, inferior circumstances, imposition, oppression, and want of protection. These cares are often aggravated by an unequal, inconsiderate or unkind distribution of property, on the part of the deceased; some of her offspring be-

ing left unprovided, and others independent of maternal authority; the real or apparent slight and neglect of friends and connexions, and the tongue of unfeeling slander. The remainder of life is occupied with the education of children, and their untimely death; the government of stubborn and refractory youths; the difficulty and anxiety of procuring them an innocent and advantageous settlement in the world, and often the frustration of all these plans by their disobedience, licentiousness and folly.

In this troubled and tempestuous sea, so infested with hidden rocks and shifting sands, how is the poor inexperienced voyager to shape her dangerous course? Unused to the exercise of authority, perhaps destitute of the ability, and in many cases of the means, of exercising it; ignorant of the nature of her property, and of the simplest process of the law; thoughtless, till now, of any cares beyond her person, or the tranquil, daily order of her house and domestic concerns, to what polar star shall she look? how shall she direct the helm? Without some wise and faithful pilot, in vain can she expect to avoid perplexity and error. Vainly will she oppose the partialities or even the suspicions, of maternal fondness to the arts of the young; or her ignorance of the world to the craft and villainy of the old. In vain, without some upright monitor, will she presume even on the innocence or the prudence of her own conduct. Without some such director, how presumptuous will it be in her to encounter the children of this world, or to rely on the most deliberate and dispassionate conclusions of her own mind. Where, then, is this guide and monitor to be found but in God and the Holy Scriptures; in the devout perusal of those sacred books; in those divine principles of morality, which are to be learned in the Gospel; in that simplicity of intention, that devotedness to the commandments of God, and that resignation to the divine will, which are there alone to be imbibed? By these she will be taught to unite the wisdom of the serpent with the innocence of the dove. She will oppose wisdom to cunning. She may err in the mazes of the law; but she will never deviate from the onward path of justice. She may sometimes mistake in the subordinate means, but never in the ultimate end.

She may be blamed by her connexions for a time ; but they will at last acknowledge the wisdom and purity of her counsels. The simplicity and singleness of her views will at length confound the artful and the double-minded. It is a great and a common error for persons in retired life to contend with those, who are practised in the world, at their own weapons. " It belongs," says an eminent preacher,* " to human wisdom to be uncertain and timid ; being always enveloped in false appearances, it has reason to fear, that a lucky glance of the eye will detect it under its mask. But the wisdom which comes down from heaven, renders us decided and composed. We walk with security, because we walk in the light. The virtuous man alone has a right to march with his head erect, and to look down upon the timorous policy and wavering prudence of the deceiver. A holy pride and noble confidence sit well upon the brow of truth and virtue."

This, indeed, is the time for adding the decision and foresight of the masculine character, to feminine delicacy and purity. This is the only season, in which women can display the true dignity of their sex, and refute the calumny that they " have no character at all." In the early period of life, this may be generally true as an assertion, though not just as a reproach : for such is the state of sequestered pupillage in which young women are generally kept, and so rare their intermixture with the world of business, that they have hardly any occasion or opportunity to require or exercise any distinguishing quality of mind : and when they become mistresses of their conduct and fortune, still the circle of their duties and relations is very confined, and the sphere of their activity very little enlarged. Though their time may be most usefully employed in the improvement of their own minds, in acts of friendship, and the exercise of charity, still are they debarred by the delicacy of their situation from any more active or public display of ability or virtue. Even in the married state their occupations are almost solely domestic : and if on subjects of greater importance, they take a part different from that adopted by their husbands, they lose more by their imprudence than they gain by their display of understanding. If they concur with them in

* Masillon.

sentiment and opinion, this is accounted for by the influence of their partners; which, in the opinion of the world, equally veils their errors and eclipses their merit. From all these misapprehensions, suspicions and restraints, the widow is released. She stands forth the independent representative of the family, the link between two generations of men, to transmit the virtues and abilities, the wisdom and the views of the father to the sons, and often, alas! to avert from them the dreadful consequences of their father's depravity and crimes.

What a delicate, distressing and arduous situation, is that of the widow of a vicious, profligate or irreligious man! How afflicting to reflect upon his memory; how shocking to mark the effects of his principles and example on his children! how delicate to contradict his opinions and reprobate his practice! how difficult to extract the poison and venom, that he has instilled into their hearts; and if it remain, what a miserable parent is she of an abandoned offspring! Wretched woman! to be continual witness of the impiety of her own blood! to behold with unavailing sorrow their depravity and crimes! to see them perish, victims to their vices; to follow their remains to a hopeless grave, and to be forced to attribute all to him whom she once loved, and is still bound to remember with affection and regret!

On the other hand, how happy as well as amiable is the relict of a respectable husband, withdrawing in the vigour of life, from the gaiety and luxury of her former situation, and if necessary, from its most moderate accommodations and comforts, to reflect upon the memory, the designs, and the principles of the deceased, and execute with fidelity a solemn trust, the last token of his confidence, the guardianship of their children, and the management and distribution of their fortune. See her, regardless of her own ease and enjoyment, husbanding the means of future prosperity, superintending, with unceasing solicitude, the instructors of her children; lonely during the hours formerly devoted to social enjoyment, and when she has lodged them safely in the arms of sleep, pondering, at the midnight hour, on the various projects she had formed for ushering them into the world, what hopes she may build upon the dispositions and powers of their now opening minds;

which of her husband's friends may most willingly assist her in making a choice and suggesting the means of success; and what benevolent and powerful patron she may conciliate by solicitation, to introduce her stripplings on the stage of human life, in some character, not derogatory to honour, nor dangerous to innocence. Behold her, during the perilous years of their inexperienced and presumptuous youth, like the maternal bird with her adopted brood, watching them with restless fears as they float along the stream of life, or stem its current, or giddily involve themselves in its eddies. View her after all her cares, the honoured head of a numerous and respectable family, who gratefully acknowledge themselves indebted to her for every thing that they are, and all that they possess; enjoying the congratulations and applause of a wide circle of valuable friends; and at last, dying in peace, amid the blessings of her children, and her children's children:* and while these sounds are yet tingling in her ears, received and saluted by the voices of the blessed, saying, "Blessed art thou among women. Many daughters have done wisely, but thou excellest them all—thou hast kept the faith; thou hast fought the good fight; there is laid up for thee a crown of glory: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

The opulent and noble matron moves in a higher sphere, but has the same duties to perform, and is invested with a yet more important trust. As her religious obligations are of more importance to the glory of God, so are her political to the prosperity of the state. She is intrusted with the office of maintaining and perpetuating the true dignity of an illustrious family; of handing down to the next generation whatever qualities may have contributed to the true glory of their ancestors; and of interrupting in their descent the growing symptoms of degeneracy; of extinguishing those family feuds, and political prejudices, too often handed down from father to son; of making her children heirs of their father's friendships, and relieving them from the burden of his enmities: and of ennobling nobility itself, by bestowing on it an honour which kings cannot confer, a pious and virtuous race. Thus will she become the

* This is a true picture of a revered person long since departed.

patroness of piety, a model of female excellence, and even an additional support to the state: while in her private character, she displays the pious hospitality of the good Shunammite, with the faith and devotion of the Prophetess Anna, and combines the amiable and affectionate manners of Naomi, with the charity of the widow of Sarepta; till in her old age she becomes the bond of union and affection among her numerous descendants, the key-stone that supports a noble house.

ERASMUS.

THE MIRACLES OF JESUS CHRIST NO PROOF OF HIS DEITY.

THERE is a logical axiom,—“What proves too much proves nothing,”—which I have frequently found very serviceable in leading me to a decision on points of controversy.

Thinking over the nature of the argument at various times, I have been much struck with its peculiar appropriateness when employed in testing the genuineness of those lines of (pretended) ratiocination adopted for the establishment of the doctrine of the Trinity. In one of the divisions of this subject, Trinitarians generally attempt to demonstrate the equality of Jesus with Jehovah from the *miracles* wrought by the former; and to this mode of reasoning I intend at present to apply the axiom, “What proves too much proves nothing.” If the miracles performed by one prophet or apostle make him equal to the Deity, it of course follows that the miracles performed by all other prophets and apostles make them also equal to the Deity; if the wonderful works of Jesus Christ demonstrate him to be the creator of the universe, the wonderful works of Moses, Joshua, Elijah, Elisha, Peter and Paul, demonstrate them to be the Creators of the Universe. For the better exemplification of my meaning, I will place in juxtaposition some of the miracles performed by Jesus Christ, and some of those performed by the other servants of God above-mentioned.

Jesus Christ turns water into wine.

Jesus saith unto them, fill the water-pots with water; and they filled them up to the brim. And he saith unto

them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it. When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was (but the servants which drew the water knew) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, and saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now. This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him. John ii. 7—11.

Elisha multiplies the Widow's pot of oil.

Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the Lord; and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen. And Elisha said unto her, What shall I do for thee? tell me, what hast thou in the house? And she said, Thine handmaid hath not any thing in the house, save a pot of oil. Then he said, Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbours, even empty vessels; borrow not a few. And when thou art come in, thou shalt shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons, and shalt pour out into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside that which is full. So she went from him, and shut the door upon her and upon her sons, who brought the vessels to her, and she poured out. And it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said unto her son, Bring me yet a vessel. And he said unto her, There is not a vessel more. And the oil stayed. Then she came and told the man of God: and he said, Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest. 2 Kings, iv. 1—7.

Jesus blasts the fig-tree.

And when he saw a fig-tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig-tree withered away. Matt. xxi. 19.

Moses brings water from the rock.

And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice; and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also. Numbers, xx. 11.

Jesus feeds four thousand.

And he commanded the people to sit down on the ground : and he took the seven loaves, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to his disciples to set before them ; and they did set them before the people. And they had a few small fishes : and he blessed, and commanded to set them also before them. So they did eat, and were filled : and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets. And they that had eaten were about four thousand, and he sent them away. Mark viii.6—9.

Elijah supports himself and two others for "a full year" on a handful of meal and a little oil.

And she said, As the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse : and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die. And Elijah said unto her, Fear not ; go and do as thou hast said : but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son : for thus saith the Lord God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth. And she went, and did according to the saying of Elijah ; and she, and he, and her house did eat many days. (*a full year*, Margin.) And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Elijah. 1 Kings, xvii, 12—16.

Elisha feeds one hundred.

And there came a man from Baal-shalisha, and brought the man of God bread of the first fruits, twenty loaves of barley, and full ears of corn in the husk thereof : and he said, give unto the people, that they may eat. And his servitor said, What ! should I set this before an hundred men ? He said again, Give the people that they may eat : for thus, saith the Lord, They shall eat, and shall leave thereof. So he set it before them, and they did eat, and left thereof, according to the word of the Lord. 2 Kings, iv. 42—44.

Jesus calms the tempest.

Now it came to pass on a certain day, that he went into a ship with his disciples ; and he said unto them,

Let us go over unto the other side of the lake. And they launched forth. But as they sailed, he fell asleep : and there came down a storm of wind on the lake ; and they were filled with water, and were in jeopardy. And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Master, Master, we perish ! Then he arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water ; and they ceased, and there was a calm. And he said unto them, Where is your faith ? And they, being afraid, wondered, saying one to another, What manner of man is this ! for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him. Luke viii. 22—25.

Moses divides the Red Sea.

And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea ; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. * * * * * And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared ; and the Egyptians fled against it : and the Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. Exod. xiv. 21—27.

Joshua makes the sun and moon stand still.

Then spake Joshua to the Lord, in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon ; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher ? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day. Joshua x. 12, 13.

Jesus raises Jairus's daughter.

And when he was come in, he saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep ? The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn. But when he had put them all out, he taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying. And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha-cumi ; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, (I say unto thee) arise. And straightway the damsel arose,

and walked ; for she was of the age of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment. Mark v. 39—42.

Peter raises Tabitha or Dorcas.

Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which, by interpretation, is called Dorcas ; this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did, and it came to pass, in those days, that she was sick, and died ; whom when they had washed, they laid her in an upper chamber. And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men, desiring him that he would not delay to come to them. Then Peter arose, and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber : and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made while she was with them. But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed ; and turning him to the body, said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter, she sat up. And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, he presented her alive. Acts ix. 36—41.

Jesus raises Lazarus.

Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always : but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. And when he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes ; and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, loose him and let him go. John, xi. 41—44.

Paul raises Eutychus.

And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep ; and as Paul was long preaching he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead. And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him, said,—Trouble not yourselves, for his life is in him. When he therefore was come up again, and had broken

bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed, and they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted. Acts. xx. 9—12.

Jesus raises the Widow of Nain's Son.

Now, when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow : and much people of the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, weep not. And he came and touched the bier : and they that bare him stood still. And he said, young man, I say unto thee, arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother. Luke vii. 12—15.

Elijah raises the Widow of Zarephath's Son.

And it came to pass after these things, that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick ; and his sickness was so sore that there was no breath left in him. And she said unto Elijah, what have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son? And he said unto her, give me thy son. And he took him out of her bosom, and carried him up into a loft, where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed. And he cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son? And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again. And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah ; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived. And Elijah took the child, and brought him down out of the chamber into the house, and delivered him unto his mother : and Elijah said, see, thy son liveth. 1 Kings, xvii. 17—23.

Elisha raises the Shunammite's Son.

And when Elisha was come into the house, behold, the child was dead and laid upon his bed. He went in, therefore, and shut the door upon them twain, and prayed unto the Lord. And he went up and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands ; and

he stretched himself upon the child, and the flesh of the child waxed warm. Then he returned, and walked in the house to and fro; and went up and stretched himself upon him; and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes. And he called Gehazi, and said, call this Shunammite. So he called her; and when she was come in unto him, he said, take up thy son. 2 Kings, iv. 32—36.

Ascension of Jesus Christ.

And it come to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. Luke, xxiv. 51.

Ascension of Enoch.

And Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him. Gen. v. 24. By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation, he had this testimony, that he pleased God. Heb. xi. 5.

Ascension of Elijah.

And it came to pass, as they still went on and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. 2 Kings ii. 11.

These are all the miracles which I at present think it necessary to parallel, in order to establish my case, that if the power of working miracles prove Jesus Christ to be God, it also proves Moses to be God, Joshua to be God, Elijah to be God, Elisha to be God, Peter to be God, and Paul to be God. But the power of working miracles is thus found to "prove too much," hence by the logical axiom, it "proves nothing," and consequently, such a power cannot prove Jesus Christ to be God. I am not unaware of its being asserted by those who feel the force of this argument and would anxiously escape from its influence, that the other apostles and prophets pray to God, or otherwise acknowledge that it is by his aid they work the miracle, while Jesus Christ performs it, as it were, of his own right. True, in the majority of instances above paralleled with those of Jesus, prayer is made to God; but does not Jesus pray to God at the tomb of Lazarus? Does he not thank his Father for

having heard him? What does he pray for, if not for the resurrection of his friend? Again, in the cases above cited, Elisha does not pray for power to multiply the widow's pot of oil, nor does Paul pray for power to raise Eutychus from the dead; neither do they in any manner acknowledge that power to be derived from Jehovah. If then the non-acknowledgement of the derivation of power prove Jesus Christ to be God, it also proves Elisha to be God, and Paul to be God, and my logical axiom is again applicable. We are not, however, less in ignorance as to whether the power of working miracles possessed by Jesus Christ, was inherently his own, or whether it was bestowed upon him by his God and Father. Let his own repeated declarations set the question at rest for ever:—*The Son can do nothing of himself.* John v. 19. *I can, of mine own self, do nothing.* John v. 30. *I do nothing of myself.* John viii. 28. *I must work the works of him that sent me.* John ix. 4. *The Father that dwelleth in me he doeth the works.* John xiv. 10. These declarations are taken from only one of the Gospels, and from that one too, which is fancied to afford so much colouring to the Athanasian hypothesis: need I search the other three for parallel passages? the evidence already given is surely sufficient.

Londonderry,

ALUMNUS.

{ Although little can be objected to the *particular* conclusion, drawn from the above premises, in accordance with the logical axiom stated by Alumnus; yet I would beg to suggest to him the propriety of paying due attention to the converse of his axiom; and to remind him, that, to the generality of readers, *what proves too little* is as unsatisfactory as *what proves too much*; and that there is some difference between an argument, “which proves *nothing*” and an argument which proves the *negative* of a proposition.

In order to make the parallel complete, and the conclusion satisfactory, in reference to the general character of Christ, I should simply suggest to Alumnus, the necessity of not confining himself merely to the *miraculous works* of Christ, as contrasted with those of the favoured servants of the Most High in all times. But he ought also to take into consideration the divine instructions of Christ, in which *miraculous power* is perhaps more eminent than even in his wonderful works: he ought to regard his whole life and the testimony that was borne in his behalf by prophecy, by visible and audible signs from heaven; and he ought to contrast all these circumstances with similar parallel circumstances, if such can be found connected with any other individual of sacred or civil history. He should then perceive, that, although these circumstances do not prove the Deity of Christ, yet, that they place him in high preeminence above all the prophets and apostles that have ever been upon the earth.”

I should be extremely happy to hear from Alumnus again, and to see that he has carried out the parallel a little farther.

EDITOR.]

PHILANTHROPY.

WHATEVER objection may be raised against that system of philosophy, which constitutes benevolence the essence and the criterion of moral excellence, none can lie against Religion for exalting it to a cardinal virtue, establishing it on the authority of God, and recommending it by the example of the Messiah. Without, therefore, entering into any disputes concerning the theory of morals and the foundation of virtue, I shall confine myself to that divine dispensation, which, with the wisdom and simple majesty that might be expected from its origin, and the authority of which its founder was conscious, seizes upon a grand, universal, practical principle, and indelibly stamps it with the seal of heaven upon the heart of man. Without discussing or alluding to any prior controversy, or anticipating objections, or determining whether it was the only standard of virtue, he solemnly and affectionately pronounces, that no man can love God, or be loved by him, or be a true disciple of Jesus Christ, if he hates his brother or neighbour; and that under these terms are included all mankind, however they may differ from us in nation, or religion; by whatever prejudices, civil or religious, we had been kept at variance.

Among the various modes in which this virtue may be illustrated and enforced, I shall at present prefer that of stating the obligations and opportunities to do good, which every relation in which we stand to our brethren suggests.

Among the effects produced by that powerful principle, sympathy, it inclines us to feel an attachment to all who are in the same condition or situation with ourselves, whatever it may be. Habitual jollity, and society in grief or oppression, are equally powerful in kindling affection. The rich and the poor are respectively attached to each other by sympathy. Freemen are bound together by a communion of privileges, and slaves or prisoners by a participation of bondage. The citizen feels a partiality for his townsmen, and the rustic for the inhabitants of the country: merchants and tradesmen, professional men and private gentlemen, are each of them endeared to those of their own class in society. It is the business of philosophy and religion

to extend these contracted circles : not to suppress any kind affection, but to liberalize it ; not to extinguish even a spark of brotherly love, but to produce a general glow of benevolence ; and by a more liberal supply of suitable fuel to convert those partial fires which too often are attended with jealousy and bickerings, into an universal lambent flame.

Agreeably to this, the Christian religion teaches us to love each other as brethren, as Christians, as men ; and is so cautious of encouraging illiberal partialities, that it avoids too particular a recommendation even of patriotism and friendship.

The most sublime and beautiful view, that it gives us of our fellow-creatures, is that of members of a common family and children of one parent. Nothing can have a more powerful effect than this in conciliating the affections of men to each other. It produces that kind of sympathy, which arises from dependence on the same power, participation of blessings from the same benefactor, and a partnership in afflictions to which all are liable, proceeding from a being to which we are all equally subject. If children are ashamed to quarrel in the presence of their parents, how could men indulge in such bitterness, and strife, and anger and malice, and clamour, and evil-speaking, if they habitually recollected, that they were risking the esteem and affection of their heavenly Father by thus quarreling, wrangling and fighting in his presence ! How tenderly and elegantly do our Saviour and his beloved disciple recommend this consideration by representing the love of God and the love of man as inseparable ! “ Beloved, let us love one another ; for love is of God ; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love.—Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.—If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.—If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar ; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen ? and this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also.”

The same sympathy should be excited by a recollection of our common nature. It is a natural bond of

union, that we all participate in the same faculties, affections and dispositions of soul, the same figure and powers of body, the same expression of aspect, and faculty of speech, by which we are qualified to convey our thoughts, excite corresponding ideas in the minds of others, carry on the most beneficial and endearing intercourse, and incorporate for mutual assistance. These circumstances should render even the name of man dear to man. They should excite the same emotions that would arise, if we were for the first time to behold a creature of our own species, after associating only with the beasts of the forest.

To a sentimental mind the participation and common enjoyment of the same world should communicate a sensation of sympathy and love. To such a mind it is not a matter of indifference, that, let our situation, condition or country be what they may, we have all a common interest in the same sun ; that from various regions we all contemplate, at the same time, the mild lustre, and ever varying form of the moon, or the more lively radiance of the stars and planets ; that we all breathe the same air ; that the same earth, in obedience to the same laws, furnishes food and raiment, lodging and fuel, and the various comfortable and elegant enjoyments of human life to all : that by the intercourse of commerce we are continually interchanging our superfluities, and alternately relieving each others' wants : and that by the general circulation of correspondence and diffusion of literature, every people carries on an instructive and delightful conversation or communication of thought with every other.

The contemplation of the future world gives rise to a yet more solemn and deeply interesting sympathy. What can be more affecting, what more conciliating, what contribute more effectually to suppress our contentious passions, than the reflection, that we are all on our pilgrimage to an eternal scene of things, through the awful and tremendous gates of death, where sickness and pain, sorrow and anguish, with their numerous satellites, sit in perpetual watch ? that we are now employed in promoting the same divine plans, and to be tried by the same judge, and destined to such situations in the future life as we may have qualified our-

selves for filling!—that there we may associate with men of all nations, religions and languages—that the most irritating conflicts and important revolutions in this world may then appear of no moment farther than as they have affected the eternal destinies of men: and that with ingenuous shame we shall there be compelled to take our enemies to our bosoms!

The next relation, in which we stand to each other, is that of Christians. We are accordingly reminded of this by being exhorted to love the brotherhood, and the household of faith. Our Saviour makes brotherly love the test of faith, the token of discipleship. We are not to imagine, that this is an illiberal and confined principle, restricting our affections to persons of our own religious persuasion: for the nature of the love inculcated is the reverse of bigotry; the example of the good Samaritan was intended as a clear comment on every doubtful expression, or rather as a warning against any illiberal interpretation of Scripture; and in fact, the relation of Christians to each other was meant by our Lord to be commensurate with that of man to man; since it was his design, that his church should embrace all nations, tongues and languages. It was the wish of Jesus to bring all men to God; and if this were impossible, at least, to collect a holy society and brotherhood, from every nation under heaven, who should consider themselves as the family of God, live in obedience, and exercise worship to him, behave to each other as brethren, and look upon Christ as their master and preceptor.

But let it not be supposed, that this universal benevolence is to extinguish our love for the brotherhood and the household of faith. There are peculiar affections due to every relation respectively—good-will to all men—attachment to our countrymen—love to our relations, and an especial zeal in promoting the welfare of the brotherhood, and the household of faith. None of these should clash with the others; they are all consistent, and even co-operative.

As brotherly love is thus inculcated by our spiritual relations, so is it enforced by our political connexions. The circumstance of living in society under a common government is calculated to bind men together by fraternal ties.

Except in such times as we have unhappily fallen upon, men are strongly attached not only to the country in which they live, but to the government and laws to which they are subject. The spot which gave them birth, the most ungrateful soil, which they labour with the sweat of their brows, are objects of general attachment. Their country is preferred to every other in point of climate, natural curiosities, mountains, rivers, lakes, the size, beauty or courage of the inhabitants, in short for some quality or other real or fanciful: and this common pride in the same advantages inspires common attachment to each other. Sympathy operates in the same manner with respect to laws and government. Men are united in affection by a similar mode of living, by conforming to the same rules, and contracting similar habits. They very generally feel the same partiality for the laws and constitutions of their respective countries, and often prefer an arbitrary and oppressive tyranny, or a confused and turbulent state approaching to anarchy to the freest and wisest government: but whether they prefer their own situation or not, their being associated, whether in good or ill, tends to maintain mutual affection; if in good, by vanity and exultation; if in calamity, by condolence and sympathy.

These bonds are drawn yet closer, as the sphere of action and the limits of the connexion are contracted. In cities and towns men grow yet more attached to each other, by friendly society and daily intercourse; by frequenting the same walks, and meeting in places of worship or amusement. Even the name of the town is a bond of union and affection. Thus by the all-wise providence of God, every circumstance in our condition conspires to promote mutual affection; and if any of them be converted into occasions of enmity and dissension, our guilt is aggravated by our perverseness in counter-acting such wise and benevolent designs.

These intentions of Providence appear more manifestly as we come nearer home. Home by the ancients was considered as a sacred place, and the hearth was the altar round which were assembled the statues of the domestic gods. We cannot be said to have improved upon this sentiment, when in the sturdy spirit of feudal independence, we denominate it a castle instead of a temple. But whether a man's house be

considered as a place of devotion or of security, whether as under the protection of God or man, religion or law, it is the focus of brotherly love. A family is a most beautiful contrivance for uniting mankind in indissoluble bands of affection, and extending the rays of benevolence as from a centre. The farther these rays are spread, and the more widely the sphere of attraction is expanded, the more will family connection answer the ends for which it was established; for the natural effect of this diffusion is the intermixture of families, and a general concatenation of a whole people by the most endearing links. Thus the ties of blood are extended till they are knit with those of country, and the kinsman is lost in the patriot. And in proportion as civilization, refinement, and false liberality, tend to lessen this attraction, to dissolve the sacred ties of blood, in the same proportion do they impair a more elegant and useful system than they are capable of forming. Let relatives of every degree be considered, treated and addressed as members of the family, be their condition ever so mean, till they forfeit the title by misconduct; and then, be their condition ever so exalted, let them be disowned, or neglected. Thus will family connexion contribute to the promotion of brotherly love, and at the same time of religion and morality. But the place in which it will contribute most to the encouragement of virtue, and from which the very phrase, brotherly love, was taken, is a single household. There the influence of parents and masters upon children and servants, and the mutual affection of brothers and sisters will most effectually display the wisdom of Providence; and if properly exerted, call down the blessings of heaven upon them and their children's children. Subordinate to the duties of relatives are those of neighbours. Proximity of residence is calculated to produce such an intercourse of good offices as cannot fail to promote benevolence: and as every circumstance in our situation is the result of infinite wisdom foreseeing every effect of its plans, we may adduce this as an additional proof of the will of God, that we should cultivate brotherly love, an additional opportunity and obligation to do good.

The affectionate attachment of friends will be readily admitted into the same class: but it was reserved for Revelation first to extend our benevolent affections to

strangers, and finally to command us to love our enemies. This is the utmost extent to which our kindness can be expanded, and to many it appears unnatural and extravagant. Yet when it is exercised, it not only excludes from the mind the torment of every malevolent passion, but preserves that tranquillity and superiority which are most gratifying to the benevolence, the indolence, and even the pride of man. If hatred be returned for hatred, evil for evil, there will be no end to exasperation. Every injury will produce retaliation, and every retaliation injury, till the minds of both parties are inflamed to the utmost degree of exacerbation, every kind and pious affection effaced, and every malignant disposition indelibly branded upon the heart. The final result of such enmity can be nothing else than the misery of inextinguishable rage; and its cure the perdition of the adversary. What pleasure men can take in such a process is not easily conceived.

Compare this with the divine command to love our enemies. What is the effect of that benevolent emotion upon the enemy? What can it be but that of coals of fire heaped upon a stubborn mass of refractory ore? What is its tendency with respect to yourself? What else than composure of mind, that kind of piety which is attended with a sense of duty and of superiority, and an absolute freedom from every painful sensation? What will be the probable consequence to both? An immediate reconciliation, if both parties act on the same evangelical principle:—a suppression of every violent passion, a soothing of every angry emotion, and a speedy extinction of animosity: for anger cannot burn without fuel. And though one of them should refuse to yield to the gentleness of his antagonist, the benevolent party will still enjoy the tranquillity of a benevolent mind, and receive the reward of the peace-maker, without being debarred from the privilege of self-defence, in case of an unprovoked attack.

From the strong and unqualified expressions in which these and similar injunctions are conveyed, it is manifest that they are not confined to those mutual quarrels and animosities, which are often excited by trifling indiscretions, and in which both parties may be blamed. They extend to wanton and cruel enemies, who hate us without cause, oppress us by their power, and ruin us by the

basest and most ungenerous arts. “If ye only love those who love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same? And if you salute your brethren only, what do you more than others? Do not even the publicans so?” By parity of reasoning what merit can we claim, when we only overlook such errors as we are every day guilty of ourselves; pardon an offence which we have already resented; or grant forgiveness where we have so much reason to ask it?

Would to God, that the genuine spirit of Christian charity and brotherly love were more generally diffused among the existing generation of men;—that by some special exertion of his providence he would check that venomous and rancorous antipathy which even Christians and fellow-citizens are so prone to indulge, and which in a great measure frustrates the design of those beautiful and gracious provisions of our Heavenly Father, on which I have dwelt in this essay;—disturbing even the harmony of families, and the peace of towns, and kindling civil discord and perpetual hatred among countrymen and Christians; dissolving the ties of friendship, and extinguishing every sentiment of humanity, honour, and religion.

NEMO.

COMMENTARY ON ISAIAH, ix. 6.

“For unto us a child is born; unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.”

IN my observations on Isaiah, vii. 14, I endeavoured to shew by arguments which I consider unanswerable, that the prophecy contained in that passage cannot *literally* apply to Christ, but must have primarily related to an *earthly* Prince—who, from the history of his reign, and a mass of circumstantial evidence, we have every reason for concluding, was Hezekiah. In addition to what I have already advanced, I may mention as a further confirmation of the fact, that at the viii. 8. the Prophet foreshewing the invasion of Judah by the king of Assyria, addresses the Jewish King by the title, “O *Immanuel*”—which by comparing with 2 Kings, xviii, 13, we are bound to infer, if Scripture be consistent, that the personage thus designated must have been Hezekiah.

The passage under present investigation is also very properly supposed to relate to the same Prince; and we have the stronger grounds for believing so, as the event prophesied in the 7th chapter, is here represented to have already taken place. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." I conceive, that the prophet here recorded what was an actual fact—that Hezekiah was then in existence—and that what may be strictly denominated the *prediction*, related to the *appellations* by which he should afterwards be known, and the peculiar events by which his reign should be characterized. So that this language seems to apply much more naturally and chronologically to Hezekiah, who was then in his minority, than to Christ who did not appear upon earth till above 700 years subsequent to that period. But it is evident that even if it did relate to Christ, it is no direct proof of his *Supreme Deity*, or equality with God. The language itself is apparently contradictory, and requires explanation to render it consistent. Observe the nature of the passage, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given;" and this "*child*" who is born, this "*son*" who is given, is to be called the "*everlasting Father*." Now it is evident, that as a *child* or *son*, the title of "*father*" could not be strictly applicable to him, as this would lead to the monstrous absurdity, that he was both *father* and *son* to *himself* at the same time! But, "*his name was to be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace*"—in relation to some cause or circumstance connected with his life and character.

Hezekiah then, to whom I suppose the passage more immediately to refer, was to be the father or founder of a new and better age. His reign was to be a reign of peace and prosperity to Jerusalem, which had been much distracted and subject to many calamities, during the evil and unhappy government of his predecessors. He was about to usher in a new and better order of things, by abolishing idolatry, and by reforming and re-establishing the whole state and condition of the people. In this sense he was to be called "*Wonderful*," from the remarkable events which were to take place during his reign; "*Counsellor*," from the wise enactments and decrees by which his administration should be distin-

guished; the “Mighty God,” from the dignity and greatness attached to his character, not the “Almighty God” as that is the peculiar title and prerogative of Jehovah alone—the “Everlasting Father,” as the institutor of an *age* which was to *last not for ever*, but during an extended period of time; and in the full and literal acceptance of the phrase, “the *prince of peace*.”

Much in the same manner we may view the prophecy as applied to Christ, of whom Hezekiah was strikingly typical. Jesus Christ, the “Son of God,” was to be the most remarkable personage who ever appeared upon earth; whose wisdom and instructions as being in the “bosom of the Father,” and admitted to a knowledge of his counsels, were to surpass all that by any prophet or divine messenger had ever been delivered. He was to be invested with superior power and authority, and might justly be called the “Mighty God;” the “Everlasting Father” also, not as the Father of universal nature, who hath existed from all eternity, but as the father and founder of a new dispensation—the dispensation of the Gospel,—which we have reason to hope will flourish and extend to ages yet unborn; the messenger of “glad tidings,” and the “prince of peace.”

Our acquaintance with the life and ministry of Christ—with the divine religion which he established—the miracles which he performed, and other striking events connected with his history, will at once suggest to us the very appropriate applicability of these titles to him, without derogating in the least from the honour and majesty of the Supreme God; and that the Prophet, taking this view of the subject, was not carried too far in his inspired ardour, in announcing the coming of the Messiah in colours so vivid and language so expressive.

If the Jews, however, had like Trinitarians understood the prophecy as relating to the Almighty, and that it was the coming or appearance of Jehovah whom they worshipped, that was predicted; the language employed would have been altogether inappropriate and superfluous, and instead of meeting a favourable reception, would more likely have excited their incredulity and roused their indignation. How would it have sounded in the estimation of a Jew, who was taught to entertain the most exalted notions of the Deity and the God of their worship, to have been informed, that he

was to be "*born*" unto them as a "*child*," and *presented* unto them as a "*son*?" It is not to be supposed, that they would have suffered the great name of Jehovah to have been *profaned* by such language, even by one of their own prophets, had they so understood him. And it may be doubted, whether the prophet would have believed the *truth of his own inspiration*, if it had impressed his mind in the sense used by Trinitarians. The language also if applied to God, would be as *superfluous* as profane. To have told them, that the "*Government was to be on the shoulder of God*"—who by the very nature of his existence, is the supreme, absolute, and undisputed governor of the Universe—to have told them, that He, who was the object of their purest love and adoration, was to be called Wonderful;—that He, who *alone* is all-wise and omniscient, was to be called "*Counsellor*;" that He who is possessed of all power, was to be called the "*Mighty God*;"—that He, whom they worshipped as the eternal Jehovah, the Creator of universal nature, was to be called the "*Everlasting Father*;"—that He, who is the source of all happiness and the fountain of all goodness and benevolence, was to be called the "*prince of peace*,"—would have been a most anomalous application of language, and an ascription of titles in reality less exalted and less characteristic of their notions of the boundless glory and infinite perfection of the Divine Being, than what their religion taught them to entertain.

These are strong presumptive arguments against the soundness of the inference deduced from the passage by Trinitarians, of Christ's equality and co-existence with the Father. But I stop not here—I shall endeavour to demonstrate by evidence the most satisfactory and convincing, that from the epithets, "*mighty God*," and "*everlasting Father*," they are not sanctioned by the slightest authority in promulgating or maintaining such an opinion. I have already shown by a variety of arguments, that these titles must have been originally applied to an *earthly Prince*, which, in itself, is evidence conclusive that they cannot be a proof of "*Deity*" when applied to Christ.

I further observe, however, and lay it down as an incontrovertible proposition—that a *similarity of names or titles*, is in no instance an infallible proof of an *equa-*

lity of attributes or properties, in the persons or objects to which they are applied. For example, we find in the *natural* world, a variety of objects called by the *same name*; but never do we meet with two even of the *same species*, exactly alike. However strong in some cases may be the resemblance, there is invariably some line or mark of difference, by which they can be distinguished from each other. Let us take by way of illustration the stars of the firmament:—Now, under the name “stars” or “planets,” we include a vast variety of celestial bodies, which owing to distance and the want of closer observation, appear to the naked eye strikingly similar. Astronomers, however, have found by more minute inspection, that they all differ, either in regard to magnitude, light, motion, or some other property by which they can at once be discovered and recognized. Let us adduce as another example among thousands, the word “*trees*.” We find that under this *name* countless numbers are classed of the same and of different species; and yet let us be placed in the midst of a forest, we cannot find two perfectly similar. Either in point of altitude, dimension, stateliness, durability, they exhibit some marks of dissimilitude, which nature seems to have transcribed throughout all her works.

The same law of distinction prevails throughout the whole of the *animal* creation. And even though the resemblance be in some cases so impressive, that our discriminative powers are put to the test, the *fact* still remains the same—that they are *two* or more objects, *two separate and distinct existences*, each of which occupies a particular portion of space peculiar to and inalienable from itself, and is composed of different materials and vital principles from the other.

Let us take, however, as an example, perhaps, more applicable to our subject, the “*soul*” of man. Under this *name* may be included the mind or animating principle of every human being upon earth. Yet though all are originally constituted with a portion of the same intellectual powers, and may be said to possess them in a greater or less degree, we shall find no two alike. There is a familiar observation, which embraces all that might be said on this point—“that every man has a *mind of his own*.” They differ in judgment, taste, imagination, comprehensiveness, or some other faculty, giving

to mankind the most extraordinary and useful diversity in their habits, pursuits and opinions. I maintain, the same argument holds good in regard to beings of a higher order; and though we have no visible demonstration of the fact, we may reasonably infer from analogy, that *celestial beings* of the most exalted rank and dignity differ in some respect from each other, and that as there is "one glory of the sun, another of the moon, and another of the stars," there are also comparative degrees of spiritual glory and blessedness among the inhabitants of the heavenly world, and that all, without exception, fall short of the transcendent excellence and perfection of him who is the great centre of all light and beatitude, in whose presence they dwell, and before whose throne they adore.

I observe then, in relation to the text, from a similar train of reasoning, that the title "God" does not prove an *equality of attributes* in the persons or beings to whom it is given. The term itself admits of great latitude of meaning—and as the name "*man*" may be applied to every human being of whatever color or clime, so the term "God" may be applied without any violation of language, and is frequently applied in Scripture to persons endowed with *divine honours*, though possessed of none of those attributes which are the peculiar prerogative of the Almighty alone. In my observations on the term "Immanuel," I pointed out, that those invested with superior authority, or appointed to offices of trust, received the title "*God*" as a mark of distinction. Thus Moses is said to be a "*God*" to Pharaoh. The Psalmist addresses the chiefs of the people by the title "*Gods*." Christ himself indirectly recognizes a similar application of the term, when he says, John x. 35. "If he called them *Gods*, unto whom the word of God came." Idols also and inanimate objects of worship,—mere blocks of wood or brass, and compositions of senseless matter, are by their votaries styled "*Gods*." Yet who is the individual so stupid to believe, that the persons or things so denominated, are possessed of the infinite attributes of Deity?

Will Trinitarians affirm, that the adjective "*mighty*" in the passage under consideration, marks it as more strongly characteristic of deity? If so, I direct their attention to a few passages in which the term "*mighty*"

is used, merely as denoting power, strength or greatness, but cannot possibly imply omnipotence. Thus, Gen. x. 9. Nimrod is called a "*mighty* hunter before the Lord." xviii. 18. It is said of Abraham, that he should become a "*mighty*" nation. 2 Samuel, i, 19. David lamenting over Saul, exclaims, "How are the *mighty* fallen!" 1 Chron, xi. 12. Three of the most eminent leaders or captains under David are distinguished by the title of the "*three mighties*." We also read of the "*mighty ones of the earth*," of "*mighty kings*," "*mighty princes*," "*mighty angels*," "*mighty works*," "*mighty seas*," "*mighty cities*," "*mighty thunderings*," "*mighty tempests*,"—and numerous like applications of the term; which shew how frail and fallible is the foundation on which Trinitarians build some of their most beloved doctrines!

Is the power and majesty of the Supreme Jehovah, I ask, ever expressed in such doubtful phraseology? No, but it is set forth in language the most sublime and impressive, which the mind at once inspires with adoration and reverence towards the Great Sovereign both in Heaven and on earth. Thus he is styled "*the one only living and true God*," "*the Father of the Spirits of all flesh*," "*the Almighty*," "*the holy one of Israel*," "*the most high God*," "*the Lord of hosts*," "*the blessed and only potentate*," "*the King of kings and Lord of Lords, who alone hath immortality*." Such is the strain of the sacred writers when dwelling on the attributes of that glorious and incomprehensible Being by whose omnipotent mandate millions of worlds were called into existence, and who reigns with absolute and unbounded dominion over the vast extent of the material universe. I might enumerate a thousand other passages in which the *unequalled supremacy* of the Father is asserted in language so clear and convincing, that it is wonderful, how even during the most degenerate state of the church, a truth eternal and manifest as the existence of Jehovah himself, was ever corrupted or effaced from the minds of men in the midst of the most commanding testimony both from nature and revelation.

Besides this, I take the direct authority of Christ, which bears against Trinitarians evidence so overwhelming, that, though they may attempt to *evade*, they cannot *resist* its power: Trinitarians maintain Christ's equa-

lity with the Father. He says himself, "*My Father is greater than I;*" "*All things are delivered unto me of my Father;*" "*I can of mine own self do nothing;*" "*To sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father;*" "*I came not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.*"

Will Trinitarians attempt to avoid altogether the insurmountable barrier which is here placed against their creed, by having recourse to their last hopeless alternative, and asserting that he was speaking merely in his "*human nature?*" If space permitted, I would cut off all hope of retreat even *there*, and prove it to be a mere *theological deception*—but I shall at present only direct their attention to a single passage in 1 Cor. xv. 24, &c. in which with the most minute precision and specific reasoning, the Apostle sets forth the *utmost extent* of power and authority with which Christ is invested as King and Head of the Church—his *deriving* that power from the Father—and his finally *delivering it up* to the Father, when the object which he is now appointed to execute shall be fully accomplished. Let it be specially observed also, that he speaks of Christ *not in his human nature*, but in his present *glorified state* and highest exaltation at the "*right hand of the Father.*" ver. 28 "*And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.*" Here is an Apostolic declaration, so powerful, so convincing, and so completely decisive, that it is sufficient to crush at once the doctrine of "*Christ's equality,*" and to raze to the foundation the ideal fabric of Trinitarianism, with the mighty sanction of all the creeds, councils, and conclaves, that have ever been the abettors or promoters of error.

The title "*everlasting Father*" is the only other in the passage which requires notice, being quoted by Trinitarians as a proof of Christ's eternity and co-existence with God. I have already endeavoured to explain its proper signification when applied to Christ. But I ask, did Christ ever assume this title to himself? Was it ever during the course of his ministry given to him by his disciples and followers? Or did the Apostles, who were set apart "*to preach Christ*" and whose object

it was to exalt and magnify him in the hearing of the nations, ever designate him by this appellation? I assert not—that Christ never laid claim to it, and that not in a single instance throughout the whole of the New Testament, is the name “everlasting Father” given him, by which the person predicted by the Prophet was to be “called.” On the contrary, he is invariably represented under the character and appellation of the “Son,” as dependent on and subordinate to the Father.

But admitting the propriety of its application, I affirm at the same time, that the phrase “everlasting,” in support of Trinitarians, proves nothing, as we find it more frequently coupled in Scripture with objects and things which must perish and come to an end, than with those which are destined to endure for ever: For example, God promised to give to the Jews the land of Canaan as an “*everlasting* possession.” The fact proves that their possession of it was to be bounded by a limited period of time, as they have long since been extirpated from the land, and their posterity scattered over the face of the earth. We read also of the “*everlasting* hills,” “*everlasting* doors,” “*everlasting* priesthood,” “*everlasting* armies,” &c., which sufficiently proves that the term is used in many cases, where the attribute of *eternity* is neither implied nor expressed. In common conversation we say of a man who has lived beyond the ordinary term of mortals, and who still shews symptoms of strength and activity, that he is “*everlasting*.” We say also of edifices, monuments, and works of art remarkable for their antiquity and durability, that they are “*everlasting* ;” which is nothing more than a strong admiration of certain *qualities* inherent in the objects, by which they have sustained, and may sustain, through many a century, the ravages of the tempest and the lightning’s shock ; but must in the end fall under the common law of dissolution, to which all material substances from their very nature are liable. It is not to be supposed, then, that the inspired writer, if he had intended to hand down to future ages a belief in Christ as co-eval with the great first cause of all things, would have made use of such ambiguous language ; but that he would have expressed his meaning in terms so decisive, as to leave us no room for doubt or disputation on the subject. Even according to the admission of Trinitarians themselves,

the title "Father" cannot be applied indiscriminately to the "*first*" and "*second*" persons of the "Trinity." Amidst all the confusion and contradictions in which they involve themselves and their disciples by the irrationality of such a doctrine, they endeavour to preserve, at least nominally, the distinction between the "Father" and the "Son;" and signify by the words of their own creed, that the "Son *proceeds* from the Father." As to the sense or meaning, if any, which they attach to "*proceeding eternally*," I leave them to indulge their own views of the subject in quiet, without attempting to disturb their mental placidity at present. But their admission, I urge,—as admit they must, that the "*first*" person of the "Trinity" cannot be the "*second*," and that the appellation of the "*Father*" cannot literally be applied to the "*Son*," without the most glaring violation of language and outrage upon reason—proves, that if they retain a shade of consistency, they must attach some other meaning to the title "*everlasting Father*," when bestowed on Christ, than as conveying the idea of his equality and co-existence with God, who *alone*, in the strictest acceptation of the term, is denominated in Scripture by the title of the "FATHER."

I shall not, however, trust altogether to their candour and consistency, when the stability of a doctrine *for many reasons* so dear to them, is at stake; but support my own views by the unerring and infallible testimony of scripture; and I would beg Trinitarians to mark minutely the clear and explicit line of distinction, which is invariably kept up by the sacred writers, between the "Father" and the "Son," in regard to *priority* and *inherent* power on the one hand, and *derived* existence and authority on the other.—John i. 14, "And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only *begotten* of the *Father*."—vi. 57, "As the living Father hath *sent* me, and *I live by the Father*."—viii. 42, "I proceeded forth, and came from God; neither *came I of myself*, but *He sent me*."—Luke i. 32, "He shall be great, and shall be called the *Son of the highest*."—x. 21, "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and of earth*."—xxii. 29. "And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as *my father hath appointed unto me*." Matthew 27, 43. "*He trusted in God*: let him deliver him now, if he

will have him ; for he said, *I am the Son of God.*—John xx. 17, “ Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto *my Father* and *your Father*, and to *my God* and *your God.*”—Acts, iii. 13, “ The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our Fathers, hath *glorified his Son* Jesus.”—ii. Cor. i. 3, “ Blessed be God, even the *Father* of our Lord Jesus Christ.”—1 Cor. viii. 5, 6, “ For though there be that are called Gods, whether in heaven or in earth, as there be Gods many and Lords many ; but to us there is but *one God*, the *Father*, of whom are all things, and we *in him* ; and *one Lord Jesus Christ*, by whom are all things, and we *by him.*”

I ask Trinitarians, can they for one moment hold the doctrine of the eternity and co-existence of the “ Son” with the “ Father” against a file of such overpowering evidence, without belying the word of God, deceiving themselves, and imposing upon others ?

I have thus endeavoured to prove, by arguments which, I trust, will be satisfactory to every impartial mind, that the doctrine of Christ’s “ supreme deity,” as extracted from the prophecy of Isaiah by Trinitarians, is not founded on correct views of the passage,—is not consistent with other scripture,—and cannot be sustained by a minute and critical examination of the language itself.

The truth is, that the whole mystery, if any can be attached to it, is explained by attending to the *style* of the same penmen. We find, that in many parts of scripture, but particularly in the prophetic writings, it is the most *florid* that can be imagined ; and that they were in the habit of giving to the objects or characters of which they spoke, the highest possible colouring. In portraying any remarkable event, or depicting the person by whom it was to be accomplished, they seem to have been carried away in many instances by an impulse of feeling almost approaching to enthusiasm. Hence we read of “ mighty ones of the earth,” of “ mighty deeds and mighty acts,” and a variety of similar expressions, calculated to raise the mind to the highest pitch of admiration, in dwelling on the character of those, of whom such things are recorded. Such vivid imagery and animated diction are the peculiar feature of all Eastern writings, and account at once for the

exalted and dignified titles with which the subject of the prophecy is invested. It is necessary, therefore, in every case where such passages occur, to view them in the simple light of truth, apart from all figurative and fanciful delineation; as it is thus, only, we can arrive at just and satisfactory conclusions in regard to their meaning.

The passage before us, however, fully explains itself, and confirms the position which I have been attempting to establish, by proving that *God himself* could not be the subject of the prophecy, since it was by *his Divine superintendence* that the whole was to be accomplished. Verse 7,—“of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever.” Then, after a full pause, the prophet sums up all by telling us,—“the zeal of the *Lord of Hosts* will perform this”—that is, the Almighty himself. By his power and interposition will the person spoken of be advanced in his kingdom,—and by his providence, will all those fortunate events which are to take place during his government be accomplished.

By keeping up in our minds this proper distinction between the *agent* and the *object*, the *speaker* and the *person or thing* spoken of, we can never go far astray in our interpretations of Scripture. Trinitarians, by neglecting to observe this rule, by confounding characters, and attaching to scriptural terms and names a forced and unnatural meaning, are very prone to puzzle not only themselves but others, to pervert the aim and object of the inspired writers, and to render the sacred narrative in many cases unintelligible, self-contradictory, and devoid of practical utility. J. C.

The REV. SAMUEL DILL, on the “True Deity of the Son of God.”

MR. DILL is a leading member of the General Synod of Ulster, and is now numbered amongst the fathers of that body. His Essay on the “true Deity of the Son of God,” consisting of 137 octavo pages, has just made its appearance. If the quantity of the work be alone considered, his friends can have no just reason to com-

plain of the price of it ; and if the quality of it be taken separately, his opponents can have nothing to fear from his arguments. He merits praise for his exercise of the right of private judgment, and his exposure of those half Trinitarians, who have done so much injury to reputed Orthodoxy by their unguarded expressions on the one hand, and their timid admissions on the other. The title which he has prefixed to his Essay is somewhat complex, and might do for a folio volume of Calvinistic Theology. The words to be found in the title-page are,—“ *The origin, nature, and dignity of the Sonship of Jesus Christ, in which the self-existence and true Deity of the Son of God, are established on Scripture testimony. Being a reply to the principal arguments of the most popular writers in defence of Eternal Generation.*” If these words, as arranged in the title, have any meaning, Mr. Dill has taken in hand to *establish the origin and nature of the Deity of the Son of Deity*, and to overthrow the old Trinitarian hypothesis of the *eternal sonship and generation* of Jesus Christ. This is a task for no ordinary man ; but great minds will attempt extraordinary works.

Before I paid any attention to the title-page, farther than to read in it,—“ By the Rev. Samuel Dill of Donoughmore, in connexion with the General Synod of Ulster,”—I had perused the greater part of the Essay, and had persuaded myself, that, on turning back to the beginning of the book, I should find,—*Mental Wanderings, by the Rev. Samuel Dill.* But although I did not find these words exactly, yet I was satisfied that the verbose title-page, and the magniloquent and incoherent matter which followed it, were worthy of each other, and of their author.

Mr Dill's Essay, however, will be a favourite with all parties occasionally, as he has put down arguments which are favourable to Unitarianism, Sabellianism, and Trinitarianism, as taught in the different churches. Whatever his Trinitarian brethren may think, he has my hearty thanks for objecting to the terms and epithets, “eternal son,”—“eternal generation,”—“eternally begotten,” as applied to Christ. Though these phrases are to be found in the Westminster Confession, and other Standards of his church, Mr. Dill knows they are not only unscriptural, but that each of them contains within itself

a palpable contradiction. For whoever or whatever is *eternal*, can neither be *generated* nor *begotten*, nor be the *son* of any being. But how Mr. Dill saw into the impolicy and absurdity of his Trinitarian brethren, in using such terms as those just quoted, in conjunction, while he himself has united in the same sentence these words,—“*the origin, the self-existence, and true Deity of the Son of God*,”—I leave to his readers to discover. If the terms *eternal*, and *son*, convey contradictory meanings to Mr. Dill, as they must do to every one who will seriously reflect, how does he suppose that inquirers after truth can reconcile the terms *origin* and *self-existence*? Son presupposes Father, and consequently cannot mean self-existence; and origin means beginning, and consequently cannot be applied to Deity, who had no beginning, but who is “the eternal God.”

But the theological poison in circulation by the advocates of “eternal generation” put Mr. Dill under “the necessity of publishing and sending forth,” as he says in his Introduction, “*the only scriptural and effectual antidote to the world*.” Wonderful is the sagacity and devotedness of dogmatism! Genius, I had heard, is ever a secret to itself; but here is a rare discovery, and the author, quite conscious of his own ability, proclaims that he is about to give an “antidote to the world,”—and all by a few dashes of his goose-quill!

What is remarkable, Mr. Dill continues a Trinitarian, while he undervalues all the interpretations of his predecessors and of his contemporaries. What will the Elders, Browns, and Cookes say to his removal of the keystone of their theological arch, and the very one which bound all their Creeds, Tests, and Overtures together? He says, “the doctrine of the Trinity is the basis of all that is essential in Christianity; and Christianity must stand or fall together with it. It is, therefore, of the last importance, that it be fully and correctly understood, so far as it is revealed; but as it is exclusively a scripture doctrine, it is solely on scripture principles, it can, in truth and consistency, be explained and defended.” Here are two sentences which I admire beyond expression. If the doctrine of the Trinity be *exclusively a scripture doctrine*, how can it be accounted for, that neither Moses nor the prophets, Christ nor his apostles, have ever once stated it! If

they have, let Mr. Dill point it out. And if it be *solely on scripture principles* it can be *explained and defended*, how comes it to pass that its advocates uniformly explain it in human and self-invented phrases, and defend it by Synodical Tests, and Parliamentary Creeds! But Mr. Dill's friends must not be angry with him, for he sees that the bulwarks, which they have built of "wood, hay, and stubble," are beginning to yield, and that the only chance for preventing the whole fabric from being carried away by the flood of Unitarianism, which is now covering the earth, is by the application of his *new and effectual* key-stone. Theirs, he knows, is *ineffectual*, and they should thank him for hewing out one of better dimensions.

Mr. Dill complains of "some modern advocates of the doctrine of eternal generation," for "refusing, as controversialists, to explain the *terms* of their own adoption." He condemns Professor Miller, of Princeton, America, for using "eternal son," and similar expressions in vindication of the Trinity, and he pointedly asks, "Did ever any controversialist, before the Doctor, conceive himself privileged to use, in discussion, terms essentially connected with his subject, which he either would not, or could not explain?" This question is well put, and I call now on Mr. Dill to answer it, in the case of the General Synod's Test, and the other unscriptural expressions which are contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith, and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms. But Mr. Dill may reply, why call upon me for an answer? Have I not said, in the fifth page of my publication—"Many, perhaps, will be disposed to rest satisfied with the doctrine of eternal generation as true, because it is the doctrine of all the standard creeds and confessions of the subscribing churches, Roman Catholic and Protestant, and that it is believed by probably a majority of Christians throughout the world. I should regard it as a very hazardous mode of deciding controversy, respecting almost any of the essential articles of our faith, to submit it to the vote of Christendom, and have it decided by a majority of voices—To the *Law* and to the *Testimony*."

This answer will not satisfy me until Mr. Dill renounces human authority in the church of Christ, or at least disowns the Synodical Test, and confines himself

to the *terms* of his BIBLE; for, although he appeals to the law and to the testimony, and condemns the unguarded and unscriptural language of his Trinitarian brethren, has he not himself employed phrases, and fallen into inconsistencies, as gross as those which he condemns? Is there a man in existence, who can form any definite idea of the meaning of the expressions which he has used in the title of his essay? His motto is,—“the secret things belong to the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever;”—but had he studied to write in direct opposition to it, he could scarcely have been much more successful. That the readers of the Bible Christian may be able to form some idea of Mr. Dill’s perspicuity as a writer, and consistency as a divine, I shall furnish them with three short passages from the body of his famous and widely advertised Essay.

1. “Son implies personality; but the Holy Thing conceived of the Virgin was *not* a person, but only one of two natures that constituted, in combination, the person called the Son of God.” Page 59.

2. “The Son of God had only one birth; not of one or of the other of his natures abstractly, but of the ever blessed person that comprehends the union of both.” Page 61.

3. “If the Holy Thing, as born of the Virgin, and called the Son of God, was not constituted of these two natures when born, I desire to know at what period posterior to his birth did he become so constituted? When did he become God manifest in the flesh?” page 89.

In the *first* of these quotations Mr. Dill would make Christ less than a person, consequently less than a human being by the conception of the blessed virgin;—in the *second* he maintains not only the *birth* of the human nature of Christ, but of the ever blessed person, which comprehends the union of both natures, and consequently, according to his theory, the *birth of God*; and hence he can say with propriety, “Mary, mother of God,” &c. ! In the *third* he argues, that if Christ had not two natures, when born, he could not have them at any after period. Sceptics will thank him for his first position, Roman Catholics for his second, and Unitarians for his third.

How fallible is frail and fantastic man! Into what wandering mazes does he run, when he once leaves the track of common sense!

In matters of mere speculation, the most inefficient and inconsistent of all characters, generally speaking, is your theological man-at-arms; were he clad cap-a-pie

in syllogistic mail of proof, and perfect master of logic-fence, how little does it avail him? Mr. Dill's unmeaning definitions and his battles with himself bring me back to the days of the old School-men.—Consider their pilgrimage after truth, the vast and all-absorbing endeavour, often a devotedness full of self-torment, incessant unwearied motion, *only no progress*—nothing but puerile feats, of one limb poised against another, the brandishing of a clumsy staff, and the shaking of a well-crammed scrip. There they balanced, somersettled, and made postures, or at best moved in a circle swiftly, with some pleasure, like spinning Dervishes, and ended where they began.—So is it with the Rev. Samuel Dill, (*and as for the Trinity, it is just as unintelligible as when he found it;*) and so will it always be with all dealers in *unrevealed mysteries*, and builders of theological card-castles. The irrefragable theologian with his categories and dilemmas may utter mighty things, and affect almost to restore the days of prophecy; but these boastful chimeras all end in smoke—and the expected revelation is not forthcoming. Ah! Mr. Dill, you made a sad mistake, when you left the precincts of your own “snug and warm” Confession of Faith, to embark on the trackless and stormy ocean of conjecture; and especially when you attempted to soar above the region of your own terrene system, to speak of heavenly and “holy things,” and to make a new revelation to mankind of the “Origin” and “Birth” of “Deity!” Into what irremediable difficulties does the dogmatism of one or two Orthodox divines involve their order!

I shall venture to affirm that the Synod of Ulster will not thank Mr. Dill for his exertions to rectify the phraseology of their standards;—I calculate that professors Stuart and Miller, of America, will say that his new views are as injurious to the common cause of Trinitarianism, as their admissions and explanations;—and as for Dr. Drummond, whom he has attacked in his indiscriminate and vituperative zeal, I will pledge my life, that he will never write a page against the Rev. Samuel Dill, of Donoughmore.

A SEARCHER OF SCRIPTURE.

DIVISION IN THE COVENANTING CHURCH.

IT is truly distressing to the humble christian, to witness the extremes to which some Covenanters have lately carried the power of the civil magistrate, in the concerns of religion. Uniformity of faith and the right of private judgment, may be professed, but they seldom co-exist in the same church. The debate which took place at the last annual meeting of the Covenanting Synod in Belfast, between the Rev. Thomas Houston, of Knockbracken, and associates, on the one part, and the Rev. John Paul, of Carrickfergus, and advocates, on the other part, has risen to an unexpected height. Mr. Paul charged Mr. Houston and his coadjutors with maintaining—"that the judicial laws against heresy and idolatry are no more repealed than those against robbery and murder—that heretics and idolators should be punished by the civil magistrates as well as *thieves, murderers, or traitors*—and that we should swear to extirpate not only Popery and Prelacy, but *Papists and Prelatists*—or, in other words, that we should swear *to extirpate the members of the Churches of Rome and of England.*"

Is it possible that any Christian, muchless any Christian minister, has had the hardihood to make such a declaration! The old Inquisition was not more frightful than this new extirpation-system of Mr. Houston and colleagues. But, for the honour of the reformation, I hope, that Mr. Paul is mistaken. If he be correct, Mr. Houston might be tried by his own law, for it is my humble opinion, that he is both a heretic and an idolator. To do unto him as he says should be done unto others, is an experiment to which he cannot object. If he be fairly represented, (and I have not heard that Mr. Paul is charged with defamation,) and will act up to his inquisitorial principles, no man who differs from him in religious opinions can be out of danger; and if Mr. Paul continue in connexion with him in the same Synod, good security should be demanded by the Covenanters of Carrickfergus for the personal safety of their minister.

Mr. Paul has published of three intended parts, the *first* and *second* of his "Review of the Rev. Thomas Houston's Christian Magistrate;"—and if Mr. Houston entertain the sentiments charged upon him by his reviewer, he is the Nero of the age, and only wants pow-

er to banish or burn every one who dares to differ from his pretended infallibility. God protect me from his power, and from the adoption of his principles! The gift of tongues is comparatively harmless, for though much foolery may follow it, little blood will likely be shed. I was once told, but did not then believe it, that extreme orthodoxy will justify extreme wickedness, and I am now beginning to think there was some truth in the observation. Mr. Paul, in hope of shaming back his brother to something like moderation, thus writes: "Were Ireland reformed—were the principles of the Reformed Presbyterian Church established—were a great majority of the inhabitants covenanters—were they *all* covenanters—were a few to apostatize and become Arians—suppose these Arians the same we have at present—how would Mr. Houston and his coadjutors suppress them? Would he fine them? Would he imprison them? Would he banish them? How would he allow the civil magistrate to treat them? Does he really imagine that any mode of punishment he could possibly adopt would diminish their numbers, or deter others from joining their standard? Were the Rev. Henry Montgomery, and the Rev. Fletcher Blakeley, arrested, and immured in a dungeon—were they placed on a pillory, or fined, or banished, what would be the result?" These are plain questions, and surely Mr. Houston is called upon to give to them plain answers. This case affords relief to the Unitarians of the present age, who are glad to find that human nature, in some instances, corrects the rigour of Calvinism, and that Mr. Paul and many others are better than their creed. Mr. Houston is a true disciple of John Calvin, who was instrumental in burning the amiable and learned Servetus because he was a Unitarian. And though few will go Mr. Houston's length, yet many are inclined to put down free inquiry and religious liberty in a way of their own. The Rev. Adam Montgomery of Drumbo, to put his orthodoxy beyond suspicion, would only *burn all books*, which do not agree with Brown's interpretation of the Bible. A lady in the county Tipperary, finding that the *Bible Christian* had been instrumental in exciting doubts respecting the doctrine of the Trinity, has *burned* all the numbers upon which she could put her holy hands. The Rev. Samuel Simpson, of Ushers'

Quay, when lately on a missionary tour in the South West of the Island, and anxious to give instruction not merely in religion but architecture, informed his hearers that there were no religious temples in either heaven or hell, as on earth, and that there were but two kinds upon earth, the Trinitarian, which were built by God, and the Arian, which were erected by the Devil. And a Bookseller, who resides not more than fifty miles from Belfast, on being civilly asked for a copy of Enfield's prayers, wondered at the wickedness of the application, and exclaimed, it is an Arian book, and, like many others, printed in hell. These are scraps of orthodoxy, which should not be lost to the public. "After the way which these men call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and the prophets."

AN ANTI-CALVINIST.

Intelligence.

CHRISTIAN TRACT SOCIETY.

THE twenty-fourth Annual Meeting of this Society was held in the Worship-street Chapel, London, on Thursday, the 9th of May, on which occasion SAMUEL SHARWOOD, Esq., was called to the chair.

The Secretary commenced the business of the Meeting by reading the balance sheet; from which it appeared that there had been tracts sold in the course of the year to the amount of £81 11s. 7d., subscriptions received £84 19s. Od., and donations of five guineas each from E. Johnston, Esq. and Robert Heywood, Esq.

The Report of the Committee was then read, which, after a few prefatory remarks, proceeded as follows:—During the last year there have been re-printed eight of the old tracts, and three new ones printed; namely, No. 4, new series, An Address to the Parents of Sunday Scholars, by Rev. J. C. Means. No. 5, The Blessedness of obeying Conscience, by Rev. E. Chapman. No. 6, The Sunday Scholar's Progress, by Rev. J. C. Means. To No. 4, has been appended, The Way to be Happy, detailed in several rules proper to be observed in all families; and a thousand copies of the latter have been also printed at 6d. per dozen. In the course of the last twelve months nearly 20,000 tracts have been circulated; of these thirty pounds worth have been purchased by the Unitarian Society of Belfast, and grants have been made to Societies and individuals wherever the Committee thought that the object of the Society could be promoted. A dissenting minister, to whom one of the grants was intrusted, makes the following excellent remarks, to which the Committee solicit the attention of the public. "I have

succeeded in establishing a Society for the purpose of lending tracts to any one who is disposed to read them, and in this way *g* think they will be very useful. This little Society is formed of the ladies of the congregation, two of whom remain in the Chapel a short time after each of the services, to lend out tracts and receive those which were given out on the previous Sunday. And if similar Societies were more generally established amongst congregations, I think they would greatly tend to further the important objects of the London Tract Society; for not only are many thus induced to read who otherwise would not; but as a means of promoting sociability, particularly among the younger members of the congregation, they are highly useful."

It will be seen by the statement annexed, that the Society owes fifty-two pounds, while there is due only thirty-eight pounds, showing a deficiency of fourteen pounds, which is, however, more than compensated by the increased amount of their stock. The Committee regret the deficiency of their pecuniary means, as they are very desirous of publishing a set of Cottage Sermons. This would furnish a variety in what they have as yet presented to the public, and would supply a want which has been much felt. They have had it also in contemplation to reprint, in a cheap form, the Morning Exercises of the late Rev. R. Robinson, of Cambridge; a little work which abounds in just and striking thoughts, and is written in a style peculiarly adapted to arrest the attention of those for whom the Christian tracts are chiefly intended. The Committee trust that the liberality of the public will enable them to accomplish one or both of these valuable objects; and they hope they may be permitted to state as some encouragement for the liberality which is solicited, that the affairs of the Society, though not flourishing, are yet in a much more clear and unembarrassed condition than they have been for years; and further, that such systematic arrangements have been made, that no delay will take place in supplying subscribers and friends with the tracts they may want.

After the Report was read, it was stated that the total number of tracts printed by the Society amounted to 552,459, and that there are now on hand 76,139, the estimate value of which is £470 16s. 8d.

The following gentlemen were elected into office for the ensuing year:—James Esdaile, Esq. Treasurer, John E. Clennel, Secretary; Committee, Rev. Means, Philp, and Wood, Messrs. Bracher, Dixon, Green, Hennell, Fernie, and Smallfield.

The following resolutions were then passed, in relation to which the Committee will be glad to receive the opinions of the Subscribers.

I. That it be referred to the Committee to consider and report at the next Annual Meeting, on the propriety of adopting into the Society's catalogue, any tracts published by other Societies or individuals, which may be regarded as conducive to the objects of this Society.

II. That this Meeting highly approve of the suggestion contained in the Report relative to a set of Cottage Sermons, and that the Committee be instructed to take measures for the accomplishment of this object.

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[FOR THE BIBLE CHRISTIAN.]

ELI AND SAMUEL.*

ELI, High Priest of Israel, in the days of the Judges, dwelt at Shiloh in the tribe of Ephraim, where the tabernacle was set up from the time of the conquest of the promised land. "While he was sitting on his seat, by a post of the temple of the Lord," superintending the worshippers, his attention was attracted by the earnest but silent devotion of a woman named Hannah; she was one of the two wives of Elkanah of Mount Ephraim, who came up yearly to sacrifice at Shiloh. When his time came to offer, he gave to his wife Peninnah and to all her sons and her daughters, portions of the offering; but unto Hannah he gave a worthy portion, for he loved Hannah; but the Lord had shut up her womb. Her rival, therefore, provoked her sore to make her fret; therefore she wept and did not eat. Then said Elkanah her husband to her, Hannah, why weepest thou? and why eatest thou not? and why is thine heart grieved? Am not I better to thee than ten sons? So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk, and she was in bitterness of soul, and she vowed a vow, and prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore: And said, "O Lord of Hosts, if thou wilt give thy handmaid a man-child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life," as a Nazarite, "and no razor shall come upon his head." Now Hannah she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard; therefore Eli, suspecting that she had partaken too freely of the sacrificial feast, said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee. And Hannah answered and said, No, my Lord; I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit; I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my

* For Ruth, see page 243.

soul before the Lord. Count not thy handmaid for a daughter of Belial. Then Eli said, go in peace, and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him. So the woman went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more sad. And they rose up in the morning early, and worshipped before the Lord, and returned, and when the time was come about, she bare a son. This son was Samuel the prophet. And when she had weaned him, she brought him unto the house of the Lord in Shiloh, and brought the child to Eli. And the child did minister unto the Lord before Eli the priest. And the child Samuel grew before the Lord.

In process of time Eli waxed old and his eyes were dim, and he was lain down in his place, and Samuel was laid down to sleep. It came to pass that the Lord called Samuel, and he answered, Here am I, and he ran unto Eli, and said, Here am I, for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went and lay down. And the Lord called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel rose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I, for thou didst call me. And he answered, I called not my son; lie down again. And the Lord called Samuel again a third time. And he rose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I, for thou didst call me. And Eli perceived that the Lord had called the child; therefore Eli said, Go lie down; and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place. The voice then announced the divine judgment and a sentence of utter extinction against Eli and his house; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. When Samuel reported the word of the Lord to Eli, that pious priest returned an answer well suited to his character; "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good."

This sentence was speedily executed. The Israelites being defeated by their inveterate enemies the Philistines, imagined that they might be confident of victory if they had the ark of the Lord within their camp. It was accordingly transported thither by the sons of Eli, but without effect; for in the ensuing battle, the army was overthrown, the ark fell into the hands of the enemy, and the sons of Eli were slain. When this news

was suddenly communicated to Eli, who was sitting on a stone at the way side, trembling for the fate of the Ark, "he fell from off the seat backward by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died; for he was 98 years old and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years."

Eli and Samuel differed widely in age, character, and manner of living. Eli seems to have been entirely occupied with his devotional and sacerdotal duties. Samuel took the lead in the political affairs of those distracted times. He was the last of the Judges. In his time the Philistines were entirely subdued. And in peace he managed affairs with equal prudence and success. Ramah was his place of residence; but he made a circuit every year. His circuit towns were Bethel, Gilgal and Mizpeh. On his resignation of the government he was able to make the following memorable appeal to the whole congregation of Israel. "I am old and grey-headed; and behold, my sons are with you; and I have walked before you from my childhood until this day. Behold, here I am: witness against me before the Lord, and before his anointed; whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind my eyes therewith, and I will restore it you? And they said, Thou hast not defrauded us, neither hast thou taken aught of any man's hand. And he said unto them, The Lord is witness against you, and his anointed is witness this day, that ye have not found aught in my hand. And they answered, He is witness." In his quality of prophet, however, he retained a commanding influence as long as he lived.

In one respect these eminent men bore an unhappy resemblance to each other. They were both culpably negligent in the government of their families. The sons of Eli were guilty of rapacity and licentiousness in the execution of their office, so that "men abhorred the offering of the Lord." The sons of Samuel "took bribes and perverted judgment," so as to become the cause of a revolution in the government and a change of the federal republic into a monarchy.

The offence which brought on the ruin of those great families still prevails throughout all the orders of socie-

ty even to the lowest. I shall therefore avail myself of these examples to submit to the readers of the Bible Christian some reflections on the importance of family duties and the danger of neglecting domestic government.

It seems to be an ordinance of Providence, that families should be the origin of every other connexion, and that domestic duties should be the foundation of virtue public and private. Whether we contemplate the sources of commercial prosperity, social concord, or the progress of knowledge, virtue, and religion, in particular states or in the whole world; nay, whatever speculations we may form concerning the felicity of the world to come, all flow from the good conduct of particular households.

We may venture to assert it to be a determination of the Divine mind, that the happiness of the man shall be intimately connected with the management of the child; the harmony of the neighbourhood with the temper and virtue of the individuals who compose it; the prosperity of the district with the concord and industry of particular vicinities, the welfare of the state with the prevalence of those qualities in every district; and the peace of the world with the wisdom, virtue and piety of the several states of which it is composed.

We may prove the truth of this by reversing the picture. It is scarcely possible, that a family should be happy, in which no attention had been paid to the morals or education of the children; and in which ignorance, immorality, and brutal manners had been encouraged. Nor is it supposable, that a neighbourhood or district inhabited by such families should exhibit any thing else than scenes of poverty, brutality and misery. If we enlarge the space in which these qualities are to operate, and multiply the individuals by whom they may be indulged, we shall only augment their pernicious effects in the same proportion; and should we suppose such creatures to be endowed with immortality, what do we do but conceive an immortality of wretchedness, a perpetual accumulation of guilt and a demoniacal or diabolical society, to which no human tongue or imagination has ever done justice?

This statement of the elevated rank, which every head of a family holds in the scale of society, and the

plan of Providence, must give every one an exalted conception of the importance of that situation. When we apply this standard to our discharge of relative duties, we cannot avoid thinking meanly of ourselves. We must see, that we often entirely neglect the duties of a very important station: and look only to our own ease when we should consider the welfare of society, or by a pernicious indulgence prefer the present gratification of the child to the future respectability of the man, to the usefulness of the citizen, the dignity of a rational being, and the salvation of an immortal soul.

I believe we may safely say, that a good domestic man is a good man in every other relation of life: at least this assertion will not be liable to a greater number of exceptions than most general rules are subject to. This will appear from enumerating some of those principles by which such a person will be actuated. One of them is a regard to the true honour and dignity of the family, whatever may be its rank in society. This will not only render him solicitous to train up his children in virtuous sentiments and useful knowledge; but also make him anxious that no part of his own conduct shall tarnish the lustre of the family character. As far as competence conduces to this object, he will employ every expedient of honest industry to raise his children above degrading necessities and dangerous temptations: but would think the revenues of a kingdom dearly purchased by a stain upon the honour of his house. This honour consists in innocent manners, virtuous and generous dispositions, inflexible integrity, and mutual attachment, all cemented and dignified by piety. While the establishment or preservation of this character is the first object of the master of the family, he must acquit himself with dignity in every other department of his business.

The daily exercise of generosity, the habit of looking in every thing to the good of his wife and children, rather than to his own personal advantage, will prepare the domestic man for acting a disinterested part in more public life; and preserve him from that selfish turn of mind, which is sometimes imputed to those who have not been so happy as to form family connexions.

A continual interchange of confidence, sympathy and kindness, with the members of the family, must neces-

sarily mellow his temper and soften the severity of his natural disposition : a desire of training up his children in religious principles will also habituate him to such reflections and exercises, as, in all probability, in his unconnected state, he might have overlooked or slighted : and a sense of the frail and delicate nature of such numerous and precious possessions must incline his heart to look up to his father in heaven, in humble acknowledgement of dependence, earnest hopes of assistance, and fervent supplication for a continuance of his protection.

The importance of domestic relations and duties will also appear, if we consider the extensive influence, which the master of a family possesses, compared with others. Beside that most important authority which he exercises over his children, his influence extends to his servants, and even beyond the walls of his house his numerous relatives demand a share of his attention, and cannot fail to be affected by his character and conduct. When we consider that every individual of this numerous society may become the stock, from which a number of scions may shoot ; and that this progeny, planted out in endless succession and multiplication, may be affected by the virtuous and pious manners of the head of one respectable household, we cannot too highly estimate the dignity and importance of such a character.

On the contrary, to reverse this picture also, as the good domestic man will probably be respectable in every other part of his character, so the man who can violate his duty to his own offspring and domestic connexions, will ill deserve the confidence of mankind in any other relation ; and one, who does not see the importance of those duties, that are imposed by consanguinity and affinity, will be prone to mistake and confound the relative importance of every other duty.

If a man shall, for any selfish gratification, or under the dominion of any tyrannical passion, neglect or insult an inoffensive relative, ruin the prosperity and blast the hopes of his children, or involve in misery and shame her who has generously thrown herself on his honour and affection for the happiness of her life, how can that man be entitled to expect affection, friendship, esteem, respect, or attention from the rest of the world ? If he cannot see the value of an exemplary discharge

of the duties of kindred, or has no taste for the dignity and pleasure they confer, what assurance can we have that he will not be equally insensible to the obligations of every other connexion when his private interest can be served by the violation of it? What chains can bind the man who is not bound by the strings of the heart, and the ties of blood? There are men, it is true, who despise these bonds, and yet are received by the world with an air of esteem and respect: and it is one of the reproaches of the present age, that even amiable men will so far suppress their feelings, as to practise this deceit; but whatever condescensions may be required by the laws of good breeding, or the ceremonial of society, let no such man be trusted: let him feel, whenever he expects confidence or calls for sympathy, that he has been rather tolerated than respected in the world.

In short, home is the centre of happiness, respect, and usefulness; and from this centre, let every man carry his works outward: but if, instead of working from a centre, he shall work inwards from a wide circumference, he may make a splendid and imposing appearance when reconnoitred from a distance; but when attacked by fortune, he will find himself betrayed in his very citadel.

The character and duties of the exemplary head of a family, require no abilities, attainments, or virtues, that may not be reasonably expected in a civilized Christian country; and even an inferior degree of merit and authority would be of unspeakable advantage to the neighbourhood, in which it should be found. Such a degree of eminence and influence is attainable by almost every man in his own family; and if it is not attained, I fear the old are as much to be blamed as the young. There is a natural deference paid to age, and an habitual reverence for parental authority, when supported by virtue, moderation, and property; and when it is set at nought, there is some radical defect in the character of the senior as well as that of the junior. It may admit of a question, which is most in fault; but when a general contempt of age and experience takes place in a country, there has been a scandalous inattention to character, or to family government among the people; the levity and indiscretion natural to youth, had not been corrected and overawed by firmness and prudence

in the old ; the minds of children had not been preoccupied by wholesome precepts and habits, but abandoned to the inroads of licentiousness and scepticism. If young people are generally disrespectful and presumptuous, their fathers are assuredly vicious and ignorant : or have, through indolence, thrown up those reins of parental government, which they were unable and unworthy to hold. Let not young people be treated with austerity, nor debarred from innocent amusement ; but neither let them break loose from parental authority. Let them not be confined to grave and formal conversation ; neither let them be daily witnesses of levity, scepticism, and contempt of legal authority. Let home be made as agreeable as is consistent with innocence and edification, by cheerful society, and liberal indulgence : but upon no account suffer your children to form any connexions without your consent and approbation. Support the authority as well as the affection of parents ; and let your children see that they cannot enjoy your protection and liberality without submitting to your advice, and conforming to your commands. Let the government of the family be considered as a sacred trust, for the discharge of which you must account ; and do not let yourselves imagine, that a neglect or relaxation of domestic government can be excused by the general prevalence of those youthful excesses which it is intended to curb. Use the power which God and man, nature and law have put into your hands for those purposes for which it was bestowed.

I know that before this can be effected, many will have to reform *themselves*. I am sensible, that when the heads of families spend their evenings from home, the children must be abandoned to the tuition of servants, and the youth will flee from the deserted, and comfortless mansion to any society that solicits their company ; I know, too, that the society which solicits their company will in general be the most dangerous ; for innocent and reputable societies use no solicitation ; I am, therefore, convinced, that before you can restore domestic government, you must revive domestic society : but that is only saying, that in order to produce the most happy and beneficial effect, you must adopt the most agreeable means : you must make yourselves truly happy in order to render your children and servants truly good.

You will then experience that virtue contributes to happiness, and happiness to virtue, by mutual re-action. If you encourage or suffer the young people under your care to grow up unprincipled and ungoverned, in a contempt for purity of morals and gravity of deportment, incapable of ruling themselves, and forgetful of all authority, you will soon lose their obedience, respect and even love. Never imagine that you can restrain the man when you could not rule the child.

Finally, when we purpose to make any great change in any part of our conduct, it is dangerous to attempt it by degrees. That is, to flatter vice and to be ashamed of virtue: a miserable commencement of reformation! It is to inspire our sins with a hope, and damp our virtuous ardour by the fear of procrastination. Every day the habit of sin will gain strength, and our resolutions of amendment will dwindle and pine. When we form a vigorous purpose of reformation, we are masters of our passions; the least delay may render us their slaves. Every step in this dilatory progress, exposes us to a fall; and our evil dispositions are continually on the watch to supplant us. Besides, what reason can you give for this compromise with sin? I appeal to your own hearts if every reason for delay that they suggest to you is not a motive to sudden exertion. Assume a resolute air and a decided tone, worthy of the virtuous purpose you entertain. Never parley nor stand on the defensive with vice or error. Break off all conference: act on the offensive; and the enemy will fly before you. When you meditate any improvement or change in your plan of life, let some precise moment be fixed for the change. Fixed periods are obstacles that check the gliding current of procrastination; and in general the most propitious period is the present. As to every thing else there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven; so the present is always the season for reformation and improvement. Keep in mind, then, the importance of your family relations, whether immediate or remote; reflect on the happiness, which it is in your power to confer and to enjoy; and above all on the obligations to which you are subject by the laws of reason and the word of God.

ERASMUS.

TO THE REV. SAMUEL DILL.

Rev and dear Sir,—With the permission of the Editors of the *B. Christian*, I shall take the liberty of addressing to you two or three letters on a pamphlet lately published by you, entitled, the “Origin, nature and sonship of Jesus Christ.” As I intend in these, I trust, with the charity but also with the plainness and sincerity of the Christian minister, to remonstrate with you and others of your brethren on what I consider an unfairness and want of candour in your mode of conducting the argument, in reference to the Trinity against us, I have thought it but honest towards you to lay aside the guise of an anonymous correspondent, and affix my name to this communication. Should you conceive yourself unjustly dealt with, you will know where to bring home the charge.

As it is always a more pleasing employment to praise than blame, allow me to commence by congratulating you on the step you have taken in emancipating yourself from the antiquated and unscriptural doctrine of eternal generation. I rejoice at this on two accounts : first, because it is delightful to see a fellow-christian throwing aside the trammels of long established error in making even one step onward in a knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. But I rejoice at it still more, because, low as I think you and your brethren of the Synod of Ulster have sunk under the slavery and degradation of human authority in matters of faith, your present conduct is a proof that there are still some faint glimmerings of the glorious light of religious liberty remaining ; enough, I trust, to shew hereafter, how odious and oppressive the manacles in which you have been fettered. You have boldly spurned at a leading doctrine taught by the *accredited standards of your church*,—the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms,—and afforded an additional proof to the thousands that had gone before, that there is a point of slavish degradation to the authority of man beyond which the free-born energies of the human soul cannot sink.

But then, sir, allow me to ask, why it is that you and others of your brethren like you, are often so severe in your censures upon the conduct of those, who have only advanced a little a-head of you in the glorious race

of religious freedom? Allow me also to ask, how is it that you have taught your own children, and that you still continue to teach the young people of your flock, to call Jesus "the eternal son of God," a doctrine which you distinctly and conscientiously disbelieved? And as if all this were nothing, how is it that from "courts constituted in the name of the Lord Jesus," you have published to the world books teaching this doctrine as the faith of your church, when you have in your own consciences the evidence that it is not the faith of your church? Is it, sir, in accordance with that manliness and integrity of character for which in other respects you have long been distinguished, both to teach and bind upon the consciences of those who may succeed you in the ministry, doctrines which you know and believe to be only the "commandments of men?"

Again, I complain of a want of distinctness, as well as fairness and candour, in the way in which you conduct the great and leading subject of dispute between us in the present day. I shall specify the grounds on which I make this complaint, trusting to your candour and kindness, if I am in error, to point out my mistake, and if wrong, I trust I shall have the manliness and honesty to acknowledge it. The great subject of controversy between us is not the eternal sonship of Christ, but, *who is the God of the christian?* And you know that this has always been the great bone of contention in the Christian church from its first introduction, unless when human law and power interfered to stifle all inquiry upon the subject. Now, when you ask us who is our God? we reply, "to us there is but one God the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." 1 Cor. viii. 6. We say that he is to be worshipped in the name of his only Son, the one Saviour and Mediator; "And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall *ask the Father in my name*, he shall give it you. Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name, ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." John xvi. 23, 24. When asked farther for the grounds on which we rest our faith and conduct, we reply, this is the God to whom the Apostles prayed; "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." 2 Cor. i. 3. The

Being to whom Jesus our Saviour prayed, "Father, the hour is come, glorify thy son, that thy son also may glorify thee." John xvii. 1. "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me, nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." Matt. xxvi. 39. The Being, and the *only Being*, to whom Christ ever taught or commanded his disciples to pray; "After this manner, therefore, pray ye: Our Father which art in Heaven." Now you must admit, that whether we are right or wrong, all this is at least scriptural, clear and distinct, and upon this authority we rest perfectly contented.

But when we turn round and ask you, who is your God? every step we take is in confusion, perplexity, and an utter departure from the language of the Bible. You tell us, he consists of "three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and that these three are one God, the same in substance, and equal in power and glory." Now we cannot both be right, and you know it is our *interest* to be with you, and that in consequence of our determinate adherence to what we conceived to be the truth, we have suffered many privations and much obloquy and loss, from those whom you call your brethren. We have no wish to continue the advocates of an unpopular and unprofitable cause. We therefore ask you in the name of our common nature and hopes, to give us a ground on which we can rest our faith in your God. Produce *one single passage of Scripture* which declares that *three persons, or three any things are one God*, and we shall be as zealous advocates of a Trinity as ever belonged to your party. You have been challenged so to do one thousand times, and yet you have never done it. Now surely this is uncharitable in you, if you could, and yet have allowed us to remain in ignorance; and it is uncandid of you, if you could not, never having, with a few exceptions, had the honesty to acknowledge there is no such passage of scripture. Now, this is the main point at issue. Your God, consisting of Father, Son and Holy Ghost, is either revealed as the God of the Bible, or he is not. Shew us one single text of Scripture which declares this, and the controversy is at an end. If not, come manfully forward and say, there is *no such text*, that he is the God of *your reason*, and such he must be, if he is the God of inference, because inference is only the de-

duction of reason from premises more or less distinctly understood. All I ask is a distinct and candid acknowledgment of the truth; and I complain that this is generally withheld.

We again appeal to your christian candour and charity. We ask you to explain to us certain unscriptural phrases which you employ, in stating what your God is. What is the substance of God? On what ground do you affirm from a comparison of the Father and Christ, that they are the same substance? When did you examine the substance of either? Was God the Father ever born, and did he ever become truly man? Are not both true of Christ? Is he who was truly man the same substance with him who is a spirit and was never man?

Again we ask you to explain what do you mean by person? You either cannot or you will not tell. Nay, you put forward a declaration so monstrous as to shock the understanding of a child that you believe the truths contained in the proposition, "there are three persons in the Godhead," and though you cannot explain, and therefore do not understand the language in which the proposition is expressed. This you did at your meeting of Synod in Strabane. Now try how on this principle you could teach a person to understand or believe a single proposition in mathematics, whilst you refused to explain the terms of the proposition. The truth is, the thing is absurd, and yet this absurdity is published to the world by men claiming to be learned christian Divines. And when with every degree of respect for your talents and learning, we turn from you to others, compared with whom you are but as children, the learned divines of other days, to seek for this information, we find with more of candour, an equal degree of inconsistency, contradiction and absurdity. Now, sir, I ask, is it fair or candid, to describe your God not in the language of the Bible, but in the inexplicable and incomprehensible terms of human systems: to demand our assent to these, and yet, when respectfully entreated, refuse all explanation?

Turning from this Babel of confusion, we are confounded; to the term "*persona*," person, I find two meanings, in both of which it is used upon good autho-

rity; first, its proper and correct signification, an *intelligent* being. Are we to understand it in this sense? Then your God consists of three persons, that is, three distinct, independent, self-existent, intelligent beings, and if that is not three Gods, then the paganism of Greece and Rome was absolute Unitarianism.

Again, "persona," person, signifies the mask or dress worn by the ancient actors on the stage, when personating different characters, and from the Roman stage it is said you have borrowed the word by which you Orthodox Divines describe your God. Are we to understand it in this sense? Your meaning then is, that the *one God*, the *same Being*, is "three different persons," that is, *wears three different masks*? personates three different characters in relation to his creatures. Had you said three thousand, it would have been a nearer approximation to the truth, though vastly short of it, for who can pretend to describe all the characters of God to his people? This, however, is only a Trinity of names for the same being, an idea, you know, which never could enter the understandings of plain uneducated Christians. Now, what I complain of here is the confusion and perplexity which you throw around the God of the Christian, calculated to wound the consciences of those who "seek to know what they worship," and to bewilder or mislead the weak and the ignorant.

Again, I complain of your unfairness and want of candour, because when pressed to prove from Scripture the truth of the representation which you gave of your God, you evade the main point, and you tell us you can prove the eternal and supreme deity of the Lord Jesus. But surely you cannot be weak enough yourselves, nor imagine us so foolish as to think this is the same proposition with the incomprehensible and self-contradictory dogma of a Trinity. Why do you not either "stick to your text," and prove it, or fairly give it up as destitute of scriptural authority? And even when you have made the evasion, there is a want of fairness and candour. When you and your friends advocate the Supreme Deity of the Lord Jesus, have you ever condescended to tell us over what Deity or Deities he is *the highest*, supreme? When you advocate the *supremacy* of Jesus Christ, tell us, is it exercised over his own Father. and if so, what kind of son is he? certainly not

the person described in Scripture, "who though a son yet learned *obedience*," not *supremacy*. Contrast your conduct with ours. We advocate the supremacy of the Father, Are we afraid to tell over whom he is supreme? No: we say *over all being*, the Son himself not excepted; for whilst we maintain that Christ Jesus has "all power *given* unto him," and that he must rule and "reign until all his enemies are put under his feet," yet we say with Paul, "*manifestly* he (God) is excepted, who did put all things under him." 1 Cor. xv. 27.

Trinitarian writers seem to take it for granted, that when, as they conceive, they have proved the eternal and supreme Deity of Christ, they have also established the doctrine of the Trinity. Now, there is here again a want of distinctness and candour. The Deity of the Father has never been questioned, except it be *perhaps* among modern Trinitarians, who hold the *supremacy* of the Son. Now, when you attempt to prove the supreme Deity of Christ, you either forget or do not choose to tell whether you are establishing the supremacy of a Being *distinct* from the Father, or of the *same* Being, the Father: that is, the supremacy of the Father under another name. So far as I understand Trinitarian writers, which I confess is not always an easy task, they sometimes represent the Father and the Son as distinct beings, and at another as one and the same being, just as it best suits their purpose. Thus we find them sometimes employed in proving the *equality* of the Son with the Father. Now if they are equal they cannot be the same, for equality implies comparison, and comparison can only be instituted where there are two or more things to be compared; and for a similar reason, if they are the same they are not equal. Now, sir, it is important that you should be *honest* and *distinct* here. If you say they are two beings, then, as the Father is universally admitted to be God, when you prove that there is *another being distinct from him*, who is also God, you establish beyond contradiction, that there are more Gods than one. On the other hand, if they are the *same Being*, then your Trinity is only so many different names for the *same Being*. Be good enough then to tell me what *Being* is your Saviour?—who it was that suffered upon the cross? To whom did he say, "my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken

me?" Who is now your mediator and intercessor with the Father, and who was it whom Stephen saw at the right hand of God? There is no question so important in the Bible as, whether Christ be a Being, or only a name, a character, a relation? Do sir, be plain and candid here. In my next, I shall enter into a more particular examination of some of the positions advanced in your pamphlet. In the mean time, I trust that in this letter of lamentations I have not expressed myself in any way inconsistent with that esteem and respect which I assure you is felt for you by, sir, yours truly,
Ballycarry, June 24th, 1833. WM. GLENDY.

[FOR THE BIBLE CHRISTIAN.]

THE CHRISTIAN GENTLEMAN.*

WE are apt to complain, that the laws of religion are too pure for the constitution of human nature, and incompatible with that situation in which we are placed by the immediate appointment of our Maker, or at least driven by the irresistible current of human events: and having established this grievance upon ground, satisfactory at least to ourselves, we are generally disposed to convert it into an apology for the imperfect manner in which we comply with the will of God.

It must indeed be allowed, that no human creature ever attained to the perfection of the Evangelical life; and that many are unhappily, some, perhaps, unavoidably, exposed to temptations, which may reasonably be pleaded in extenuation of their frailty. Neither in such cases are we discouraged from placing a certain degree of reliance on the mercy of God, provided we struggle against the stream with a sincere desire to fulfil his will, and a godly sorrow when we fall short of the divine law.

But this is the utmost length that the most liberal casuist can go, the utmost extent of indulgence that he would be warranted to grant; for still he must maintain, and those who pay even the least attention to the sub-

* This title and subject were suggested by Sir Richard Steele's tract entitled,—the Christian Hero; an argument proving that no principles but those of religion are sufficient to make a great man.

ject, must acknowledge, that the fashion of the world must be made to conform to the law of religion, and not the will and wisdom of God to the vice and folly of man. If we admit the contrary of this in a single instance, the morality of the gospel must fluctuate with the tide of fashion; and the sanctions of religion be superseded by the caprice of an ignorant and inconsistent multitude; the authority of the law would then depend on the will of the transgressor; and the church of Christ, instead of being founded on a rock, would rest on the shifting quick-sands of popular opinion. Thus, if the sinner presumes to go further than to plead his infirmity and temptations, as alleviations of his guilt, entitling to indulgence, he debars himself from all hopes even of pardon; for he at once denies the authority of the whole law, revolts against the wisdom of the law-giver, and, as far as in him lies, subverts the whole fabric of religion both natural and revealed.

Now, if even persons actuated by such violent passions as cannot be controled without a strength of reason and vigour of resolution, which they cannot reasonably be supposed to possess, and placed in situations in which these passions have full sway, are nevertheless precluded from relying on these circumstances further than as extenuations of guilt, to be pleaded in mitigation of punishment, and encouraging them to hope for some degree of commiseration, how can those, who are neither by nature subject to the dominion of such ungovernable propensities, nor exposed, by necessity or any adventitious circumstances, to such powerful temptations, pretend to complain, that the laws of the Gospel are grievous, because they do not accord with the forms and fashions of modern frivolity.

Yet this complaint is perhaps more frequently urged than the former. When persons who are conscious of any of the grosser violations of the Divine Law, come to a sense of Religion, they confess their depravity without reserve, are sensible that they deserve the displeasure of God, and freely throw themselves on the mercy of Heaven: while others who are habitually guilty of less heinous offences, complain, that the precepts of Christianity are not more conformable to the established customs of the world. Such persons plume themselves on the innocence of their lives, without

reflecting on the slightness of their temptations and the trifling gratifications, to which they have sacrificed their duty; the facility with which they might have complied with the laws of Religion, and the wantonness of their disobedience of so easy a commandment.

That the Evangelical rule will not conform to the various modes of life, which successively obtain in refined Society, and that it can seldom be accommodated to the veering caprices of the man of fashion, is not only true, but unavoidable; (for what rule can accord with what is in continual fluctuation?) and that the fashions of the world are often of such a nature, that the law of God ought not to be made subservient to them, if it could, is equally evident. These are the minor sins and follies, which it is calculated to correct, as well as those of greater magnitude. These are some of those particulars, concerning which we are commanded not to conform to the world, but to transform our minds, that we may abandon these childish follies, and acquire accomplishments of greater dignity and value.

The man of fashion is, indeed, as little an object of respect or consideration with the more rational part of refined society as with men of a more serious cast. If he be harmless and inoffensive, he may aim at the distinction of an agreeable trifler; but this is the utmost boundary of his pretensions. There is another class of men however, who, if they really support the character they assume, will have no reason to be ashamed of themselves or discontented with religion. The man of genuine honour, politeness, and liberality, in sentiment and conduct, will find in the Gospel the fundamental principles of his plan of life and temper of mind. He will recognize a system of thinking and acting in our intercourse with the world, that is not less creditable and flattering to him, than rational and elegant in itself. In short, such is the universality of Gospel principles, that, though its primary distinction is its being preached to the poor, yet Christianity is the *gentleman's* religion, and is adapted to the manners and feelings of the most elegant and refined.

From the various and trifling significations, in which this word is used, one feels a reluctance in associating it with any thing sacred: but in its more dignified acceptance, it may be deemed the most amiable and

respectable character next to a Christian. There are others of more elevation and higher fame, such as the patriot, the reformer, and the martyr; but the stern and heroic qualities by which these are distinguished, are of rarer use, confined to a particular line of conduct, and seldom blended with the tender and endearing charities of private life. The gentleman and the Christian embrace the whole circle of social intercourse. The former is, indeed, the outside of a christian: and if persons who assume this character were always careful to make their minds conform to their exterior, little would be wanting to the perfection of their sentiments and manners; for they would find that there is nothing in the spirit of religion repugnant to their own.

Manners are a kind of visible language, and should declare the true state of the heart. When they belie each other, the man is justly chargeable with insincerity. The power of religion appears in its full extent, when it produces this union of sentiment and language, manners and conduct; when it elevates the mind and inspires the tongue, guides the actions and refines the manners. In consequence of neglecting this harmony of character, many who display an exterior of urbanity and kindness, condescension and liberality, are nevertheless very unworthy disciples of the meek and lowly, the gracious and condescending, the humane and benevolent Jesus. There are, on the other hand, very many whose minds are stored with the truths, and whose lives exhibit many of the fruits of religion, yet whose manners accord but ill with the more elegant precepts of the Gospel, and who disgrace its courteous rule of life by savage manners, revolting language, and illiberal opinions. An accomplished Christian is more rarely to be met with than an accomplished gentleman, but when he shall be discovered, he will be found to unite the essentials of both characters in one.

That we may more clearly discern this coincidence of character, let us compare those qualities which are acknowledged by mere men of the world to constitute the merit of a gentleman, with those which are required by the gospel, as constituent parts of the character of a christian; and for the sake of distinctness let us class them under the general heads of honour, courtesy, and liberality.

1. Honour is the highest refinement of the moral sense; a delicate perception of the nice shades and distinctions which take place even in virtuous principles and feelings, a sentiment of disgust and indignation, when the finer sensations of the soul are violated. A regard to principle may often be confined to home-spun virtues and duties of more manifest obligation: a desire of reputation may imply no more than an anxiety to save appearances: but a sense of honour differs from principle in the delicacy of its feelings, and the refinement of the moral excellence, at which it aims, and without the attainment of which it cannot be content. It excels a desire of reputation or fame in looking only to itself for a standard, and refusing to submit its decisions to the arbitration of popular opinion. If doubtful of the justness of its own conceptions, or the impartiality of its own judgments, it appeals to the highest authorities, and disdains any interference of the confused ideas and contaminated morals of vulgar life. The man actuated by a high sense of honour, considers veracity and fortitude as essential to his character; and the imputation of falsehood or deceit, the suspicion of treachery, hypocrisy, double-dealing or cowardice, as an indelible stain; and having set so high a value on his own dignity and purity of mind, he shuns the contamination of base and vicious company. Such are the principal features in the character of an honourable man.

In like manner the Christian is taught to cultivate the greatest innocence and elevation of soul, to consider himself as the residence of the divine spirit, and to honour himself as the temple of God. He studies, therefore, to preserve this temple uncontaminated by mean, selfish, envious, or vicious thoughts, and to avoid even the appearance of evil. He appeals from the judgment of man to the approbation of a pure and enlightened conscience, and the known will of God. He acts not with a view to catch the applause of the world, but to indulge in the conscious satisfaction of living in secret as in public, of thinking as he acts, and acting as he thinks. He is not content with shunning sin and shame, nor with attaining to a mean proficiency in virtue, but aims at the highest, gaining strength in his progress, advancing from one grace and virtue to another, setting little value on what he has left behind,

and pressing forward to the goal. He considers himself as sent into this world like his master, to bear witness to the truth, and to maintain the cause of truth and virtue with invincible fortitude. Lastly, from a sentiment of virtuous delicacy and respect for himself, as well as from a knowledge that evil communication insensibly corrupts even good manners, he keeps aloof from the society of the unprincipled and unfeeling.

2. As honour is a delicate attention to our own moral feelings, so courtesy or politeness is an exquisite sensibility to the feelings and wishes of others. It is a system of minor morals. After attaining that dignity and equity of mind, which is implied by honour, and which keeps him far from any thought of doing injustice, or offering insult, the accomplished man studies the minuter wants and sensibilities of those with whom he associates. His principle is a refined benevolence, displayed in those minute and habitual attentions, in which chiefly consists the comfort and happiness of those who are exempt from the more serious calamities, and the more urgent necessities of human life.

This quality, therefore, is included in that enlarged and sentimental benevolence, which is the great characteristic of christian morals, and might fairly be illustrated in our Saviour's life and conversation, if our minds did not revolt as at a sort of profanation, at introducing his sacred and venerable name in treating of a subject, not usually considered in a religious point of view. Although, therefore, his life, parables and precepts, might yield the best illustrations of that elegant and refined humanity, which we denominate courtesy, I shall refrain from any further allusion to them, and trust to the general impression which his character must make on every candid reader of the Gospels. Such was the effect produced by his example and precepts, or by that divine spirit of love which inspired and guided his Apostles, that hardly any thing occurs in the lives of those rude and uneducated men, that can hurt the feelings of the most polished and refined.

St. John is a perfect model of gentleness, tenderness, and condescension: St. Peter expressly admonishes us to be "*courteous*, not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing:" and from the discourses and epistles of St. Paul, the principal points

of good breeding, in its best sense, might be easily selected. In his own deportment he "became all things to all men," and studied, both in his private conduct and public ministry, to conciliate the favour and gratify the feelings of those whom he addressed, whether Christians, Jews, or Gentiles, Magistrates or Philosophers. In his distinguished and accomplished character, nothing is more surprising than the masterly manner in which dignity and condescension, vigour and pliability, affability and decision are so beautifully blended. As in his own practice these qualities were all exercised without confusion, and all assigned their respective provinces, so in his instructions to his Disciples, we find the first principles of politeness beautifully laid down. "Let every man please his neighbour, for his good to edification." "All things are lawful for me; but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me; but all things edify not." "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's good." "Bear ye each other's burdens." "Let no man look only to himself; but also to the interest and feelings of another." "Give no offence neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God: even as I please all men in all things, not for my own profit, but the profit of many." "Be ye followers of me, even as I am of Christ." "I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly." "Let love be without dissimulation. Be kindly affectioned one to another, in honour preferring one another. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." "Render honour to whom honour is due." "Let nothing be done through strife or vain-glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves." These are a few of his precepts selected from two or three chapters; but in fact throughout the whole of his epistles there are various instances of an elegant and gracious mind; whether he commends those who had done well, or apologizes and pleads for those who had offended; in

his diffidence and modesty, when obliged to vindicate himself, and in his reluctance to censure others; but this feature in his character has the best opportunity of displaying itself in those affectionate salutations with which he introduces his Epistles, and the frequent tender remembrances with which they are concluded. These, however, are too numerous to be recited here.

3. The third property of mind, on which an accomplished man justly values himself, and the want of which is generally imputed to religious people as a peculiar reproach, is liberality of mind. This quality, as it implies generosity, belongs equally to both: but when it is considered, as denoting freedom from partiality and antipathy to particular classes of people, and systems of practice or opinion, it is usually claimed by men of the world, as their distinguishing characteristic; and refused to religionists, as a virtue to which they have no claim. In this controversy I am neither obliged nor disposed to involve myself. It is not even incumbent on me to vindicate modern believers from this aspersion. On the contrary I must confess with shame, that there has always been too much ground for the reproach. It is enough if I can maintain, that this is of all others the point, on which the disciples of Christ have most notoriously deviated from the temper, precept and example of their master, and from the repeated injunctions of St. Paul.

For instances of our Lord's liberality, and the care he took to instil this enlarged philanthropy into the hearts of his disciples, I shall only refer to his conduct with respect to the Samaritans, who were the peculiar objects of Jewish bigotry. On this subject the reader will recollect his conversation with the woman of Samaria at Jacob's well: his introduction of a Samaritan, in preference to the Priest and the Levite, as an example both of charity and liberality, in his parable of the Jew, that fell among thieves: his praise of the Samaritan leper, who alone glorified God for his recovery: his rebuke to his favourite apostles, when they solicited him to call down fire from heaven on the inhospitable inhabitants of the Samaritan village, and his particular mention of Samaria in his injunction to his apostles, shortly before his ascension. "Ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the ends of the earth."

As to the liberality of Paul, I should abound too much in quotation, were I to enumerate the various texts in which he instructs the disciples as to the conduct to be observed toward the heathens, or those who are without, particularly with respect to meat offered to idols. These compose, perhaps, the purest, the most delicate, and most liberal piece of casuistry any where to be met with: equally consulting the purity of the Christian, the feelings of the idolator, and the edification of both. Another discourse, which deserves to be ranked in the same class, and relates to differences among disciples themselves, is the 14th chapter of Romans, from which I shall select a few expressions, as sufficient to bring the remainder to your recollection, and deserving particular attention in our own times: "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye; but not to doubtful disputations. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? and why dost thou judge thy brother; or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall, in his brother's way. Let not thy good be evil spoken of: for the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God."

To conclude this parallel—both true politeness and Christian charity suffer long and are kind; envy not, vaunt not themselves, are not puffed up; do not behave themselves unseemly, seek not their own, are not easily provoked, and think no evil; they bear all things, believe all things, hope all things, and endure all things. On the whole, the morality of the Gospel may be styled among its other excellencies, a system of the most refined and rational courtesy, enforced by motives of humanity and piety. If we were to suppose one man, who had attained to the highest degree of excellence, as an accomplished man of the world, and another, who had arrived at the stature and manners of a perfect Christian, the great difference still remaining between them would be the motives by which their lives were respectively governed: and here the advantage would be decidedly on the side of the Christian. His character would excel

in sincerity, benevolence and piety: from his sincerity, his behaviour would derive an inimitable simplicity; from his benevolence an amiable cordiality: from his piety a real elevation above all ambitious or interested motives. Without a tincture of religion, there is reason to apprehend, that honour will be little more than a conformity to fashion, and a mean servility to popular opinion: politeness and courtesy, a specious and hollow affectation: and liberality a cold indifference. Now, if men of distinction, or who aim at distinction in worldly accomplishments, were to animate their specious exterior with a suitable soul; if they would but cultivate those principles, which they profess and outwardly exhibit; if the elegant morality and devotion of the Gospel were to be clothed in the form and adorned with the manners of an accomplished gentleman, how much would mankind be charmed by the appearance of virtue and piety in a human form! And if they would not only pay that external respect to the common offices and the peculiar solemnities of religion, which every well-bred man affects to pay, but would look upon the morality and piety of the Gospel, in the light in which I have attempted to recommend them, they would feel an internal satisfaction, arising from consistency of character, which must at present be wanting, and contribute much by their example to turn the thoughts of their numerous imitators, to subjects the most serious and important, whether we reflect on the life that now is, or on that which is to come. If, on the other hand, the votaries of religion would study to display the suavity of Gospel manners and the liberality of Evangelical principles, in their lives and conversation, how effectually would they commend themselves and their religion to every man's conscience in the sight of God!

NEMO.

ADDRESS

Delivered by Andrew Carmichael, Esq. M. R. I. A. on taking the Chair, at the Annual Meeting of the Irish Unitarian Christian Society.

Mr. Carmichael, on taking the chair, entered upon a short history of the society, its spirit and objects. He read the resolutions under which it was constituted, and adverted to some passages in the Reports, expressing

a hope, that theological dissensions and excesses had excited such a desire of rest from the sectarian temper, and of relief from *irrational creeds*, as to prepare the way for a peaceful and scriptural faith—he then proceeded—

“I do not hesitate to say that the most irrational dogma of those irrational creeds is the doctrine of the TRINITY. More unscriptural even than Transubstantiation, no individual, whose mind has not already been poisoned with prejudices, could possibly extract it from Holy Writ—even that formula called the Apostle’s creed is pure of this conception; but whether it be received or not as the production of the Apostles, or whether any addition or not has been made, in any subsequent age to the original composition, it is certain, that it has not, from its first promulgation to the present time, imbibed the slightest tinge of that doctrine.

“The belief expressed in GOD, THE FATHER ALMIGHTY, Maker of Heaven and EARTH,” is perfectly scriptural and perfectly Unitarian.

“And in Jesus Christ, his only son, our Lord”—This also is perfectly unitarian and perfectly scriptural. The epithet of the “Son of God” is applied to our Saviour in many places throughout the New Testament. No rational man will pretend that it signifies “God”—its precise meaning may admit of dispute; but Locke maintains that it was a form of speech then used among the Jews to signify THE MESSIAH—that it was indiscriminately used by John the Baptist, Nathaniel, St. Peter, Martha, the Sanhedrim, and the Centurion, by Jews and Heathens, Believers and Unbelievers, without any reference to the Deity of our Saviour, or his eternal generation.*

“But attend to the concluding passage, and observe whether *the Holy Ghost* was believed in as GOD, or merely as a divine and inspiring influence, a holy disposition, the spirit of holiness, the spirit of Christianity—the spirit that may be considered as peculiarly the spirit or disposition of God himself. Observe the other objects of belief placed by the side, and on a level with this object regarded by so many nations as one of the Hypostases of the Godhead. “I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy Catholic church, the communion of saints,” and a variety of other objects that could not very readily indeed be deified.

* Vindication of the Reasonableness of Christianity. 2v. 645-6.

This is the first creed extracted from the scripture—I should have said the only creed so extracted.—The other two most unscriptural creeds owe more to unrestrained invention than assiduity of study—to the flights of fiction, than attachment to truth.

The Nicene Creed was composed and established *as a proper summary of the Christian faith*, by the Council of Nice in 325, against the Arians; and confirmed, with some few alterations, by the Council of Constantinople in 381, and it is well worthy of observation how much the disposition to believe—how much the appetite for indigestible doctrines, had increased between the era of the one creed and of the other. The first clause, however, of the Nicene Creed is rationally and theologically incontestable.

It announces in continuation “OUR LORD Jesus Christ as the only begotten son of God—begotten of his Father before all worlds.” Here is the first step into the regions of imagination; but it is soon followed by a second. “*God of God! Light of Light! very God of VERY GOD!* begotten not made; BEING OF ONE SUBSTANCE WITH THE FATHER; by whom all things were made; who for us men and our salvation came down from heaven and was *incarnate* by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man.”

This is the first public explicit announcement of the incarnate God, 325 years after the birth of Christ! On his ascension he is described as sitting on the right hand of the Father. It is no longer, as in the Apostles’ creed, “on the right hand of God the Father Almighty,” no! the Father is no longer the Almighty—he that was Almighty, in the first clause of this very creed, has already lost one half of his Godhead, and before we come to its close, we shall find him diminished and despoiled of two thirds of his Omnipotence.

“It is thus evident, that in the interval between these two creeds, the doctrine of THE TRINITY became a part of Christianity. But it owes its origin to pagan ingenuity. Plato, who was born 430 years before Christ, taught that in the divine nature there were three hypostases. The first he considered as self-existent, and elevated above all mind and all knowledge. He sometimes styles him *το εν*, THE ONE, and sometimes *το αγαθον*, THE GOOD. The second he considered as mind, the WISDOM

or REASON of the first, and therefore he styles him *νους* and *λογος*. The third he always speaks of as the soul of the world, *ψυχη*, or *ψυχη του κοσμου*. But a learned writer observes, that "it does not satisfactorily appear that he made the divine mind the *nous* or *logos*, a distinct intelligent being. His Demiourgos, or immediate MAKER OF THE WORLD, seems to have been the Supreme Being himself, and not any subordinate agent or principle whatever. The reason, or *logos*, which, according to him, comes from God, and by which he made the universe, seems in his view of it, to have been synonymous with *Dianoia* and *Epistemon*, the energies "of his understanding," and the exercise of these energies, "and not any other proper person or agent."

At the close of the second century Ammonius Saccus founded the sect of philosophers called new Platonics or Eclectics. He was born at Alexandria, of Christian parents; but it is doubted whether he himself continued a Christian—perhaps the wise Christians of that day did not regard the belief of the Platonic Trinity a proof of Christianity:—but there were others who eagerly received the doctrines of Plato, and thought them conformable to the spirit and genius of their own tenets.

In the beginning of the third century Origen adopted this philosophy. Dupin observes of this father of the Church, that he had very quick parts, a very strong and enlarged imagination, but relied too much on the vivacity of his genius; and often lost himself, out of too great earnestness to fathom and subtilize every thing. He was a person of most profound learning; he particularly studied *Plato's Philosophy*; and was, indeed, too much addicted to it for a Christian.

It is no wonder, therefore, that early in the succeeding century the first Council of Nice should be prepared and even anxious to engraft this scion of pagan learning upon Christian truth, particularly as many embraced this religion on condition that they should be allowed to retain their *philosophic opinions*. The first and second persons of the Trinity are identically the same in the Nicene Creed and the Dialogues of Plato; but with respect to the third, the fathers adroitly exchanged the soul of the world for the Holy Ghost. The Apostle's Creed forms the foundation for the Nicene; but almost every addition is grounded on the Platonic philosophy.

This, however, is certain, *not one of them is founded in Scripture*. They are all in contradiction to its general tenor and reiterated commands; and the jaundiced mind that could discern in Holy Writ, the Deity of Christ, the Deity of the Holy Ghost, or any other Deity but of the Father himself, could as readily deduce the *filiation* (as the Orthodox call it,) of Adam *as the Son of God*; and even infer that Moses was himself God, and the very judges of Israel a conclave of Gods—all of them being denominated Gods in Scripture.

As the Apostles' Creed forms the ground-work of the Nicene, so the Nicene forms the ground-work of the Athanasian. But whether this latter was composed by Athanasius, about the time of the Council of Nice, or by Hilary, Bishop of Arles, thirty years later, is doubtful. If by either one or the other, it was an awkward attempt to reconcile true religion with false philosophy; and to bend those rock-ribbed passages of Scripture, which declare that "the Lord our God is ONE Lord," to meet the revolting and fantastic assertion that there are three divine persons, each of whom is the Supreme Deity.

Indeed it is hard to conceive that any man acquainted with the Scriptures could seriously entertain such an opinion. The more you examine this creed, the more absurd, *even purposely absurd*, it appears. It would almost seem that the writer put it together with the sole view of ridiculing the Nicene Creed. It sets off with a vein of humour that continues nearly to its close; alternately advancing the Nicene absurdities, and contradicting and confounding them with Scriptural Truth, in such a way as evinces the perfect skill of the author in wielding the *argumentum ad absurdum*. If the Nicene Creed were a modern production, and ARIUS a critic of the *Edinburgh* or *Quarterly*, he might thus be supposed to ridicule his opponents.

"Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic Faith, which Faith, except every one do keep whole and undefiled, *without doubt he shall perish everlastingly*. And the Catholic Faith is this, that we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in unity." A more elegant and intelligible

expression would have been "one God in Trinity, and three Gods in unity."—But the critic was perhaps unwilling to strike too unmerciful a blow.

Again, the Father is Almighty, the Son Almighty, and the Holy Ghost Almighty; *and yet they are not three Almightyies but ONE ALMIGHTY*. So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God: *and yet they are not three Gods but ONE GOD*. So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Ghost Lord; *yet they are not three Lords but ONE LORD*.

He then more particularly announces the nature of each of the three persons, and adds with a naivetè that contributes fresh force to the ridicule, "So there is one Father not three Fathers, one Son not three Sons, one Holy Ghost not three Holy Ghosts—and in this Trinity none is afore or after other; none is greater or less than another; but the whole three persons are CO-ETERNAL together and CO-EQUAL."

This Creed was never sanctioned by any of the Councils of the Fathers, early or late. It was not received in France until the ninth century, nor in Spain, Germany, or Britain, until the tenth. An adherent to its dogmas observes, that "it is given as a summary of the true Orthodox faith, and a condemnation of all heresies, ancient and modern; but it unhappily has proved a fruitful source of unprofitable controversy, and unchristian animosity down to the present time."

It may be said is the *Logos* of St John, the *Logos* of Plato? There is a striking coincidence between them: so striking, that Orthodox writers have ventured to maintain, that Plato drew his information from the Hebrew Scriptures: but such an assertion is utterly unfounded in fact; and can only be persisted in by those who delight in sophistry, and have no reverence for truth. Plato's theory was demonstratively his own. His philosophy had been spreading for three centuries over Greece, Asia Minor, Palestine, and Egypt. But St. John knew little of any kind of philosophy when he left his fishing-boat to follow his master. From the recorded discourses of that master he could learn nothing of the *Logos*; but he might not have remained in ignorance of the opinions of the learned during his ministry. He planted the Churches of Smyrna, Pergamos and Laodicea, and dwelt many years at Ephesus; but he could have received

no assistance from pagan philosophy—he probably would have disdained such an auxiliary—yet at the very outset of his Gospel we are encountered by *the Logos*. Such things as pious frauds have been committed, yet this charge cannot be brought against this most important passage. It appears in every ancient manuscript in the hands of the learned, and cannot be controverted, unless some manuscript, still more ancient, shall bring new discoveries to light. I pretend not to say that there are not difficulties in Scripture, or that this is not among the number. But whatever contradicts the general tenor of holy writ—its plain, its obvious, its irresistible, its overwhelming, its universal doctrine, *that* I would regard as an apparent rather than a real contradiction. I would endeavour to reconcile the conflicting passages, and if my understanding prove unequal to the task, I abide by the commandments of God and the precepts of Christ, “I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other Gods before me.” Exodus 20th, ii. 3. “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee THE ONLY TRUE GOD, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.” John xvii. 3.

If John has said, “In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God,” (John i. 1. 14;) “And the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,”—I leave it to divines to discuss the meaning; I am satisfied to know that Christ has said, “Why callest thou ME good? There is none good but ONE, that is GOD.” Mat. xix. 17. Mat. x. 18. Luke xviii. 19. I disregard the pitiful, the equivocating, the nauseous subterfuge that would persuade us that he spoke this as Man, and not as God, when at the moment he was both God and Man, THE INCARNATE GOD, and I rely upon those powerful words which are recorded by St. John himself as uttered by the Saviour, when he was bidding adieu to earth and human kind: “Go to my *Brethren*, and say unto them, I ascend unto MY FATHER AND YOUR FATHER, AND TO MY GOD AND YOUR GOD.” John xx. 17. and upon these still more decisive words, which, in his glorified state, he impressed upon the same Apostle, in his vision at Patmos, when he fell down to worship before his feet, “See thou do it not; for I AM THY FELLOW SER-

VANT, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book—WORSHIP GOD !” Rev. xx. 8, 9.

Of what vast importance must Man consider himself in the Creation, when he can so work upon his imagination as presumptuously and arrogantly to conceive for his sake, that “HE” (in the language of the Nicene Creed) “by whom all things were made,” “God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God,” should lay aside his Omnipotence, abdicate the government of the universe, and become man, to accomplish what only, as Man, and not as God, he did accomplish. As man he taught mankind the way to God, as man he was tempted, as man he went about doing good, as man he died upon the cross, as man he reconciled man to God, and he continues as “mediator between God and man, THE MAN CHRIST JESUS.” 1 Tim. ii. 5.

Will it not curb this arrogance, and crush this presumption, to look at this earth, and to look at the universe? This earth, less in comparison than a grain of sand, undistinguishable in the beds of the ocean, and scarcely visible, as a speck from the sun that enlightens it. Even that sun, though a million of times larger, shrinks to the dimensions of a star, Arcturus or Sirius; and the Earth and her sister planets fade, as it were, into nothing; they are lost in the fields of space. But even the sun himself vanishes to a luminous point almost nothing, if seen from the milky way, and the thousands of stars of our hemisphere, the suns of other worlds, but as a luminous vapour, another milky way, in the immensity of the distance.

What is this earth to such a universe? Yet we have still a more astounding inquiry to make, “What is this universe to the universe that remains?” In the midst of that glorious firmament of stars which constitutes to us the Universe, we barely discover by the naked eye, various shining, misty spots, which Astronomers call *nebulæ*. Human vision gazing forth from one of these *nebulæ* would behold this our universe as a shining, misty spot—a nebula itself.

Yet more astounding wonders still remain—Let us look through the telescope of Herschel, other *nebulæ* not visible before, now burst out on our vision, whose light, travelling at the rate of twelve millions of miles

every minute, would require forty thousand years to arrive on the confines of our planet, and forty thousand more to reach the opposite verge of the already known creation. Could we be transported, as if on the wings of thought, to the most distant nebula among them, we should find it a universe like our own; but we should seek our own in vain, except through the intervention of a powerful telescope; remove that telescope from the eye, and our unnumbered constellations, our milky way, and all the host of heaven vanish into nothing, and leave only empty space to the eye—an unpeopled vacuum, not even distinguishable *as a vacuum*, amidst the myriads of resplendent luminaries, of which that nebula is composed.

Such then, so immense! so stupendous! is the creation of God. He alone that made it, can comprehend within the grasp of his vision, its stupendous immensity, as he sees rolling round his throne millions of effulgent suns, each attended by a gorgeous train of planets, satellites, and comets, congregated in millions of masses, each of which is a universe; and the whole an infinite congress—a countless congregation. Words fail me—language disappoints me—an illimitable wilderness of universes!!!

How can we sink back from such a contemplation to the vain and empty fabrications of man's overweening pride and presumption? The divine filiation and eternal generation of him, who, notwithstanding his godhead, did not, it is said, abhor the virgin's womb—who was wrapped in swaddling-clothes and laid in a manger—who *increased* in wisdom and stature, and *in favour with God* and man—who wept with them who wept, and rejoiced with those who rejoiced—who taught as one that had authority, and by enforcing the great principles of repentance, reformation and renewed activity in piety and virtue, took away sin, and consequently punishment—who by miracles demonstrated that he was the Christ, the anointed, the Messiah, and in the fulfilment of his mission entitled himself to that appellation of son of God, which was conferred upon him by the Universal Father when he declared, "this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased"—who, appointed as he was, to shed his blood for the remission of sins, yet was exceeding sorrowful even unto death; and fell on his face

and prayed, saying, "O my father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me—nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt"—and in his last agony exclaimed, "my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"—who was raised from the sepulchre, raised by the power of God—who "will judge the world in righteousness by **THAT MAN** whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead"—yet with all these express and incontrovertible facts and assertions opposed to us, shall we venture, in gratification of our egregious vanity and egotism, to maintain, in denegation of the only living and true God, that the man who walked this earth for three and thirty years, and on every occasion disclaimed all pretensions to Deity, was yet of the substance of the Father, of glory equal, of majesty co-eternal—uncreated, incomprehensible, almighty God and Lord? Shall we venture besides to maintain as indisputable articles of faith, the sin of Adam imputed to the innocent, the righteousness of Christ imputed to the guilty, the unlimited mercy of God, circumscribed, compressed and annihilated by his inflexible justice—the **INFINITE ATONEMENT FOR INFINITE TRANSGRESSION**—the sacrifice of an omnipotent, omniscient, eternal and infinite God, the stupendous Creator of this stupendous universe, and for what? To save a *few* monopolizing Calvinists to the exclusion of the majority of Calvinists themselves and all the rest of mankind, who, guilty or innocent, are alike "fore-ordained to everlasting death by the decree of God for the manifestation of his glory!!!" [See the Westminster Confession of Faith, c. 3, sec. 3, 7.]

Or again, to save a more liberal number of Roman Catholics, but of Roman Catholics only; not indeed by his sole merits either as God or man, but by contributing for the benefit of sinners who are not heretics, his modicum to the general store of merits equally afforded by a whole calendar of Confessors, Martyrs and Saints, and not excluding as an auxiliary the salutary influence of the purifying flames of purgatory; or, in fine, to save so many of the disciples of Luther as believe that they are saved *solely* by the imputation of the merits and satisfaction of Christ—that the sacramental bread and wine is not altogether transubstantia-

ted into the body and blood of Christ, but remain unsubstantiated, at once body and blood and bread and wine—and that they, were they the best of men, will, one and all, perish everlastingly unless they worship, with Saint Athanasius, “one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity.”

Pause but for a moment—reflect on the nature and attributes of God as unfolded in SCRIPTURE, and established in the *creation and government* of THE UNIVERSE. Look to that universe—that congeries—that congregation—that wilderness of universes, and this vast complication of absurdities bursts, at once, like a bubble.

AN AUTHENTIC REPORT OF DR. COOKE'S SPEECH.

* * *

“Who ran
Through each mode of the *lyre* and was master of all.”—MOORE.

SIR,—You are aware, that Dr. Cooke has published what he calls an “authentic report” of a speech delivered by him, at the late meeting of the Gen. Synod, in Cookstown; and as I happened to be present when that speech is alleged to have been spoken, I shall take the liberty of pointing out one or two mistakes,—and no very slight mistakes,—which the Doctor has committed in his “authentic” version of the matter. With respect to the points in dispute between him and the Rev. Mr. Carlile, I shall give myself no trouble. My sole object is to prove, that Dr. Cooke has put forward in his reported speech, sundry barefaced *untruths*. I wish to shew, that, under the pretext of giving an authentic report, he has been guilty of gross forgeries;—that he has deliberately come before the public with alleged facts, which are simple falsehoods. I care very little what it may please him to write or circulate; but I am of opinion, that when a man, who stands forth as the champion of a sect, and who affects to be influenced by pure and Christian motives, is capable of acting in the manner which I have stated, it is due to himself and to the public to unmask *such* a man, and so to expose his capacity for *fibbing*, that even his partizans may find it difficult not to be ashamed of their leader.

As the Doctor's speech was a reply, and delivered so soon after Mr. Carlile had concluded, that there could not have been time for minute preparation, we ought not to complain if he should seldom hit on the exact language that he used. But what shall I say—what will the public say—when we find the Doctor presuming to publish to the world, in his “authentic report,” whole passages that he never uttered, texts of Scripture that he never cited, arguments which he never used, and entire episodes that were never spoken? You are aware, that his virulent and low attack on Mr. Carlile was put down, by a burst of indignation. In the published speech, under the Doctor's hand, he attributes to himself the following words.—This interruption, “produced chiefly, as I am given to believe, from persons not belonging to this house, but from the few local partizans of the Board of Education, who are listening to our debates, through courtesy.” Here is a statement, the object of which is easily understood; and it is of such a kind, that it could not well have been introduced into the report through mistake. But, in the *spoken* oration, no such statement was made, nor any thing of the kind hinted at; and consequently, the Doctor has, calmly and designedly, and on mature reflection, introduced the foregoing words *falsely*.

Mr. Stewart, in the course of a sophistical speech, with which he followed Dr. Cooke, drew an argument in favour of the conduct of the Synod's Deputations, from the maxim, that *qui facit per alterum, facit per se*. This was Mr. Stewart's argument; but the Doctor thinking it, no doubt, one that suited his purpose, has taken care to appropriate it in his “authentic” publication, though it was *not* in the speech as delivered. Here, there is another *fabrication*, of the same character as the former. But I proceed to others still more extraordinary.

Mr. Carlile had made a strong impression on the house, by stating, that Dr. Cooke had, in his interview with Mr. Stanley, threatened to have him (Mr. Carlile) expelled from the Synod, or some severe censure passed on him. The Doctor, seeing how matters stood, found it necessary to deny that he had uttered the threat alleged. In his speech at Cookstown, he failed in extricating himself; but in the authorized report the difficulty

is cleared up in a manner not a little extraordinary. After disclaiming the imputation, he adds, "But I corroborate my own statement with *four competent witnesses*, who would confirm, on oath, if necessary, the accuracy of my narrative." He then represents himself as pausing in his speech, and makes the Reverends Messrs Kirkpatrick and Hay, and Doctors Horner and Hanna, (members of the deputation to Mr. Stanley,) rise and give evidence very much to his satisfaction. He next represents himself as resuming, and exulting in the triumphant case which he had made out by the help of his "four competent witnesses;" and telling Mr. Carlile, that this ought to "teach him caution and charity for the time to come." Now, Sir, what will the public think, when I tell them, that the whole of this scene is an *invention*? It is a fact, notorious to some hundreds, that the four gentlemen above-named, the "four competent witnesses," did not say one word during the course of the Doctor's speech, nor for at least *an hour afterwards*. Mr. Stewart delivered a pretty long speech, after the Doctor had concluded, and before any one of these four gentlemen spoke; and when they did speak, their evidence was as much *against* the Doctor, as he has here represented it to be in his *favour*. But without attaching much weight to this latter point, we ask any one, what he can think of the mendacious effrontery of a man who thus affects to have called forward witnesses, and then to have founded an argument as to a matter of fact, on what they are supposed to have said; and yet, that the whole scene is a pure fiction? For my own part, taking all the circumstances into account—considering that the fabrication was made in the calm of the closet, and put forth with the label "*authentic*" attached to it—and all this by a clergyman—I consider the case so aggravated, that we would look in vain for its parallel, except in the Doctor's own productions. That a parallel *can* be found *there*, is quite certain; and having furnished such another instance, I shall conclude.

Doctor Cooke winds up his speech by moving a string of *seven* resolutions, and *four* propositions, on the subject of National Education. He prefaces these, by assigning, under *seven* heads, his objections to the Government System of Education. All this, again, is *fiction*. Neither the *seven* heads, nor any *one* of them,

was put forward in his speech ; nor did he conclude his address by moving *any* resolution of *any* kind ! It was no part of his business to move a resolution, at the time. He was merely making his defence before the house, on behalf of himself and those who acted with him, on the deputations to London and Dublin. It was the business of other members of Synod to move, which they did ; and the resolutions actually brought forward related, as a matter of course, to the *conduct of the Deputations*, not to the Board of Education. Nay more, the seven resolutions which Dr. Cooke represents himself as moving, at the end of his speech, were not brought forward at all, until the following week !

I shall not proceed farther. These statements which I have made appear so extraordinary, that, but for the notoriety of the facts, they could scarcely be credited.

If, however, you, or any one else, should doubt the correctness of what I have said, I beg of you to put the matter to the proof. I have mentioned the names of Mr. Kirkpatrick, Doctor Horner, Mr. Hay, and Doctor Hanna. Let them come forward : they can at once vindicate Dr. Cooke from some of the imputations which I have fixed upon him. If they be false, let Mr. Carlile also be called upon. Let, in fact, hundreds be appealed to ; and if I be convicted of error, I shall make an ample apology. But, on the other hand, if my statements (to the truth of which I pledge myself) remain uncontradicted by any competent witness,—by any respectable individual, not one of the Doctor's partizans,—then, I contend for it, that I have a right to call upon the public for a verdict against Dr. Cooke's veracity ; and that, in proportion as the *untruths*,—the *elaborate fabrications*—are aggravated and abominable, in the same proportion shall the Doctor's word, henceforth, be regarded as unworthy of credit.—I am &c.

29th July, 1833.

NO REMONSTRANT.

ON THE SUPPOSED INCONSISTENCIES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

I HAVE read the *Bible Christian* since its commencement with great satisfaction, and much profit. I have received from it valuable and scriptural instruction, and I consider that there are some papers in it which cannot fail to command attention, from the useful and rare

information contained in them : I allude particularly to the late sketches under the signature of Erasmus, which give such picturesque views of the simplicity and innocence of primitive times.

There is, however, one circumstance which I regret. Your correspondents appear confined in their researches and illustrations. There seems a magic circle to be drawn around them, beyond the verge of which they dare not step. They venture not into a field sufficiently large. The controversy relating to the Trinity, which no doubt may be called the Calvinistic Citadel, engrosses all their thoughts ; against it all their batteries have been raised, and all their guns directed. No doubt, it is the strong rock, the fortress of Orthodox believers, and till it be demolished, in vain will the advocates of pure Christianity assail the other strongholds of the enemy. But I am of opinion, that enough has been said and written on that subject for a time. There can be no doubt that every impartial enquirer who has read the unrivalled performance of Dr. Drummond, the plain but impressive discourses of Channing, and the Scriptural essays of your correspondents, must be satisfied of the supremacy of Jehovah, and of the subordination of Jesus ; and I would wish to direct the attention of your friends to the investigation of other passages that appear intricate, and are by your opponents considered to favour their restricted, their illiberal views of the divine administration.

On the present occasion, therefore, I would suggest for an exercise to some of your critical enquirers, how it is, that Jesus can be shewn to speak consistently, when he says, in John's Gospel, vi. 44th, "No man cometh unto me, except the Father who hath sent me draw him." And again, in the xivth, 6th, "No man cometh unto the Father but by me."

Do not these passages appear to contradict each other? Is it not implied in the former, that the disciple of Christ must have been with the Father, and *taught of him*, previous to his coming to the Son ; and does not the latter lead us to think, that to be admitted to the Father, we must be acquainted with and instructed by Jesus ? Or in other words, according to the first, we have been with the Father before we can have any knowledge of the Son ; and according to the last, we have been with the Son before we have ever heard or known of the Father.

Further,—If, as some interpreters say, the words in the last passage teach, that none can inherit eternal life, be admitted to the lowest mansion in the heavenly world, or, in the language of the Westminster Divines, *be saved*, but by the Son; and if you and your friends favour universal salvation, as I think some of you do, for I have frequently observed that you take pleasure in dwelling on those portions of Scripture which teach, that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation, &c. that “they who have not the law, are a law, unto themselves; and that he will have *all* men to be saved:” I would wish to learn from you, *how* it is possible, and *in what manner* it can be effected, that those innumerable multitudes who never heard the name of Christ—who died centuries before he was born, or who live now in a state of heathenish darkness, shall be saved, and attain to the vision and fruition of God.

This important subject, sir, has occupied my thoughts for years, and I have turned over some folios in search of clear and satisfactory information, but alas! in vain. All the writers, whom I have met with, who wish for universal salvation, admit the truth of it, quote numberless passages of scripture in favour of it, and can point out the partiality and injustice of God, if the negative be asserted, but not one of them can satisfy a plain, thinking man, in *what method* it can be accomplished.

Our Calvinistic brethren, make short work of it. They say that the merits of Christ's vicarious sufferings extend backward as well as forward; that all shall be saved for whom he died, whether they were few or many, whether they heard of Him or not. They tell you that from the time God said, “the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent” till the heavens and the earth be rent asunder, the saving efficacy of his blood has operated, and shall continue to the healing of the elect, which is a declaration containing unction, highly grateful to the bulk of men, and which I would willingly embrace if I could be convinced of its truth. But as I have not thus learned Christ; as I have revealed to me, that he is the author of eternal salvation to all them that believe, and as it is questioned as a thing impossible, that men can believe who have not heard, and that men can hear to whom no preacher has been sent, I shall consider myself much indebted to you, if some of your contributors will be so good as to elucidate this subject. Yours respectfully,

C—.

ON THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST.

IN the note appended to my article—‘The Miracles of Jesus Christ no proof of his Deity,’—which appeared in your last number, you seem to have misconceived my intention in writing the paper. You very correctly remark, that ‘there is some difference between an argument which proves *nothing*,’ and an argument which proves the *negative* proposition. Of this difference I was perfectly aware, and endeavoured to maintain it: it appears I have not been fully successful. The outline of my argument, as stated in the commencement of the article, was simply this:—“If the miracles performed by one prophet or apostle make him equal to the Deity, it of course follows, that the miracles performed by all other prophets and apostles make them also equal to the Deity;” and my intention was to exhibit clearly the utter futility of the reasoning of the Athanasians, which would deduce our Saviour’s equality to “his God and our God,” from his acquired power of working miracles. Thus I made it apparent that their reasoning proved *nothing*, and thus accomplished my object. Had my design been to prove a direct *negative*,—namely, that Jesus Christ was not equal to the Father, I would have adopted a different course of argumentation, and supported my proposition by the multitude of texts which prove his derivation of existence, mission, doctrine, power, glory, &c. from the Father. I would, in that case, have adduced a host of such passages as the following:—“His dear son, who is the first-born of every creature.” Coloss. i. 15. Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: and *I am not come of myself*, but he that *sent me* is true, whom ye know not. John vii. 28. For *I have not spoken of myself*, but the Father which sent me, he gave me *a commandment what I should say and what I should speak*. John xii. 29. All things are *delivered unto me of my Father*. Matt. xi. 7. All power is *given unto me in heaven and in earth*. Matth. xxvii. 18. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, *as my Father hath appointed unto me*. Luke xxii. 29. When he cometh *in the glory of his Father*, with the Holy Angels. Mark viii. 38. This is a sample of the course I would have taken, had I intended to prove a *negative*.

In the second paragraph of your note, you seem to imagine that I intended placing Jesus Christ on an equality with the Jewish prophets and Christian apostles. To this misconception (I hope there is nothing offensive in the word) the parallels might naturally lead; but this was far from my intention, and I constructed the parallelisms merely to shew the baselessness of the orthodox attempt at reasoning by the application of my logical axiom. No person could more fully accord with your judicious advice to him who searches the scriptures to discover the general character of our Saviour than I do. In your own words, such an enquirer ought most certainly, to "take into consideration the divine instructions of Christ, in which miraculous power is perhaps more eminent than even in his wonderful works: he ought to regard his whole life, and the testimony that was borne on his behalf by prophecy, by visible and audible signs from heaven." All these circumstances should be fairly estimated, and they would in every candid mind place Jesus Christ where you and I and the Scriptures of Truth place him,—“in high pre-eminence above all the prophets and apostles that have ever been upon the earth.” My use of the words, “*other* prophets and apostles,” may also have contributed to awaken the supposition that I was for placing our Saviour in their class; and so I was, but as the first, highest, best, most beloved, and only perfect. I cannot conceive how I should style Jesus Christ otherwise than as an Apostle of God. He is incessantly spoken of as *sent*; the word apostle (*αποστολος*) literally means “*a person sent by another on some business*” (Parkhurst); and in the Epistle to the Hebrews, iii. 1, he is styled “the APOSTLE and High Priest of our profession.”

I am, sir, your obedt. servant,
Londonderry, 22d July, 1833.

ALUMNUS.

Intelligence.

THE SYNOD OF MUNSTER.

ON Wednesday, the 3d ult. this Association held its annual convocation in the Presbyterian meeting-house, Clonmel. The Rev. James Armstrong commenced the services of the day. He was followed by the Rev. Wm. McCance, who delivered an appropriate discourse from these words: “Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel.” (Gen. 49 and 4.) From this prophetic admonition, the reverend

gentleman proceeded to point out, with great beauty of expression, the necessity and advantages of perseverance, and the evil consequences of irresoluteness, especially in the cause of morality and religion.

After divine service, Mr. M'Cance was chosen moderator, and the Synod proceeded immediately to business. No matters of any general importance came before the meeting except the following:—

1st, In consequence of a misunderstanding that some Presbyterians, connected with the Association, had fallen into respecting its laws, and its conduct towards them, a motion, declaratory of the fundamental principles of this Synod, was put and unanimously agreed to. The substance of the motion was as follows: "That we acknowledge Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as the only king and head of the Christian church—that we reject all human authority in matters of religion—that we receive the Bible, and the Bible alone, as the only infallible rule of faith and practice, and that our great bond of union is, not an unattainable uniformity of belief, but "the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." It was directed that these their principles should be made known to all bodies of Christians, wishing to connect themselves with the Southern Association.

2d. In consequence of difficulties frequently occurring in proving the ceremonies of baptism and marriage, it was moved and unanimously resolved, that a common registry of all these that are performed by any member of this body, be kept by the clerk of this Synod; and in order that he may be enabled to do so, that each minister bring to the annual meeting, a list of all such baptisms and marriages as he may have performed during the preceding year.

On Thursday morning, the Synod met again, at ten o'clock, for transacting business; and was concluded about twelve, by the Moderator, with prayer.

The Synod will hold its next annual meeting in Eustace-street Chapel, Dublin.

ORDINATION.

On Thursday the 4th ult. shortly after the Synod of Munster had concluded its general business, it proceeded to ordain the Rev. James Orr to the pastoral charge of the Presbyterian congregation of Clonmel. The services were commenced by the Rev. Dr. Ledlie, who delivered an able, eloquent, and truly Christian discourse from the Epistle of James iv. 11, 12, "Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. There is one law-giver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?" From these words the Rev. gentleman pointed out, in a most forcible and impressive manner, the nature and necessity of Christian charity and true humility; and he clearly proved the daring impiety and presumption of those, who, assuming the functions of Jehovah, consider themselves entitled to be "no longer *doers* of the law, but *judges*," and who, *professing* themselves *saints*, hesitate not to speak evil, to calumniate and malign their unoffending brethren.

Would that the preacher's voice could have reached the ears of some of the *pious slanderers* of Ulster, who boast so loudly of their own *humility*; or could it even have extended to the abodes of those *saintly calumniators* in the town in which it was uttered, it would have been productive of much good in teaching them the vast difference between reputed godliness, and a real Christian spirit. The discourse was listened to throughout with marked attention, and it seemed to produce a deep impression on the minds of a highly respectable audience.

After sermon, the Rev. James Armstrong delivered a lucid explanation, and most satisfactory defence of Presbyterian ordination. He then called upon Mr. Orr to declare his views in undertaking the important office of a Christian minister. Mr. Orr, in a brief but energetic speech, professd his belief in Jesus Christ as the son of God, as the Saviour of the world, and as the only King and Head of the Christian church; in the Bible as the only infallible rule of faith and practice; and in the right of every individual to form his faith according to the dictates of his own conscience, enlightened by the scriptures of truth. His views being approved by the brethren, he was solemnly set apart to the work of the ministry by the laying on of hands; the Rev. Joseph Hutton offering up the ordination prayer. After this the Rev. Wm. M'Cance delivered an affectionate and instructive charge to the pastor and the people, and concluded the services of the day with prayer.

This ceremony, so simple and so solemn in itself, and so seldom seen performed by the inhabitants of the South, seemed to make a deep impression on those who were present. How much is it to be lamented that the plain and scriptural worship of Presbyterianism, and the simple and easily intelligible doctrines of Revelation, are so little known in that part of our isle! There it may be said there are but two churches, and these two closely allied, namely, Protestant Popery, and Roman Catholic Popery, which in their unhal- lowed contention for earthly power, have seemingly forgot that the kingdom of Christ is *not* of this world. From this rivalry the worship of God has degenerated into external form and ceremony; and Christian charity has been transformed into sectarian hate. But let us hope that a brighter day is about to dawn; and that Christianity, palsied and deformed as she is in that region, is still capable of being cured. Already has the restoring angel begun, in some places, to trouble the waters that have so long remained stagnant. It only requires some strong hand to aid her helplessness in taking advantage of the agitated pool. Had she such assistance, she would soon cast off the load of deformities under which she at present groans. Like the phoenix from its ashes, she would arise strong, and fresh, and vigorous, she would again assume her primitive appearance, and be what she was originally declared, namely, "a gracious message of glad tidings unto all people." Let then Christian ministers, if they have any regard for her whose servants they are, let them aid her weakness. Let those who desire truth in the inward parts, go forth in the defence of truth. Let Unitarians point out to Israel his transgression, and to the church of Peter her sin; and let pure and undefiled religion be emancipated from *her* tram-

mels who wears on her forehead the name *Mystery*, who is "decked with gold, and precious stones and pearls," who has in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and filthiness, and who is drunk with every tenth drop of sweat that can be wrung from the brows of millions. She has names full of blasphemy, her heads are more than one, her horn is the sceptre of earthly majesty and not the sword of the spirit, nor the word of God; and her kingdom is of this world, and therefore do her servants fight, but the kingdom of Christ is not from hence. Let then Unitarians exhibit to the minds of Christians generally, the simple majesty of truth. Let them be diligent in the defence of that religion that is pure and undefiled; for truth is great, and will finally prevail.

EXTRACT FROM A REPORT OF THE EDINBURGH UNITARIAN CONGREGATION,—PRESENTED AT A GENERAL MEETING OF THE MEMBERS IN THE CHAPEL, ON 16TH JUNE, 1833.

"Mr. STANNUS was recommended to the Congregation by the Rev. Dr. Montgomery of Belfast; and the Committee believe that after nearly two years' experience of his talents and character, the recommendation is fully borne out by the universal sense of the members, and that he is, in every respect, a most able and excellent minister of the Gospel. In estimating the value of Mr. S.'s labours, and the real amount of his success, it is necessary to be aware that, at the time of Mr. May's temporary engagement, the Congregation was more depressed than it had ever been before. Such was the amount of this depression, that though Mr. May was possessed of good talents, and was most devoted to his public duties, and, though he united with these good qualities a degree of maturity of judgment which was remarkable in so young a man, he was yet unable to get the better of its paralyzing effects. He did, however, prevent the dispersion of the Congregation, and conducted its public services with the greatest propriety and the most exemplary diligence.

In these circumstances, it was obviously necessary, that the task should be undertaken by one possessed of popular talents, and, at the same time, of prudence and discretion—qualities which are not always united with those attributes which render a preacher attractive. The prospects of the Congregation, under Mr. Stannus, may be judged of from various indications.

1. From the attendance at the chapel, which has been nearly trebled in the morning congregation; while the evening lectures were attended by crowded audiences.

2. From the number of new seat-holders added since August, 1831. One half of the whole seats let at the two last terms, were taken by persons who held no seats prior to the above date.*

3. From the pecuniary returns. These could not be expected to be much affected during the earlier part of Mr. S.'s incumbency,

* Several accessions have taken place since the date of this report. *Ed.*

when he was unknown to the inhabitants of Edinburgh. But since the close of the last course of Evening Lectures, the impression on the finances has been decided and unequivocal.

Notwithstanding a loss of 15 adult members, by death and removals—a number quite unprecedented in the space of 22 months, and which could not have been anticipated as at all a probable contingency—the weekly collections average £1 15 0. The persons whom the Congregation has lost by death or change of residence, were all of them liberal contributors to the funds; and the Committee know that their contributions would have raised the weekly collection to Two Guineas—a sum greatly exceeding what they ever were before.* In short, while some of Mr. Stannus's predecessors were aided by many fortunate contingencies, he has had to fight against casualties of an opposite description, and his success in the conflict is the best earnest of his future triumphs. * * *

While the ordinary pecuniary returns have been thus increasing, the *Seat Rents* have been increasing in a still higher proportion to what they were before, and are at the present time considerably higher in amount than at any prior period."

At the conclusion of the Report, the thanks of the Congregation were voted to Mr. Stannus.

GENERAL SYNOD OF ULSTER.

THIS Body whose proceedings have for some years engrossed so large a share of public attention, met at Cookstown on Tuesday June 25th, and continued its sittings by adjournments till the middle of the following week.—We have only room for a brief sketch of its proceedings.

After the usual preliminary proceedings, Mr. STEWART moved the re-appointment of the *Theological Committee*; better known as the *Synodical Inquisition*.

The motion was opposed by the Rev. Mr. M'KAY, of Portglenone, and supported by Dr. Cooke; who said that the appointment of the Committee had been the only efficient measure which the body had adopted for 200 years to keep out heresy. He declared candidly that his object was to keep *Arians* out of the Theological Committee. THEY HAD STILL ARIANS IN THEIR BODY!!! and as long as that was the case, he never would agree to leave an opening for the possible introduction of Arians, by *permitting* the appointment of persons holding Arian opinions on a committee that was to judge of the fitness of candidates for the ministry.

The motion was agreed to; the numbers on a division being in its favour 140; against it 41; majority 99.

With respect to a Resolution agreed to at last meeting, in favour of the equalization of his Majesty's Royal Bounty, Mr. JOHN BROWN, the late Moderator, stated, that he and Dr. Cooke, when in London,

* The *Quarterly* Collections amount to about £30 in the year.

stated to the Secretary, that, of course, the most gratifying plan would be to raise the two lowest classes to an equality with the first; but that equalization, on any principle, would be gratifying to the Presbyterians of Ulster. [Dr. Cooke denied that this had been said.] He lately in London, on another business, took occasion to draw the attention of the present Irish Secretary to this subject. Mr. B. positively asserted that he had stated this to Mr. Littleton; and supposed Dr. Cook must have forgotten it. [Dr. Cooke said he was present, and taking part in the conversation; and that no such thing had been mentioned. If it had, he would have opposed it with all his might. He had been sent there to watch Mr. Brown; and, had such a thing been mentioned, he (Dr. C.) was not likely to have neglected his duty by remaining silent.] Mr. Brown had certainly used the words; and if Dr. Cooke had been sent to watch him, it was quite useless, as neither he nor any one else would be able to do that. (*Laughter.*) He then expressed his opinion, that there was a fair prospect of getting the lower classes advanced. It was the opinion of Sir John Byng, that application to that effect should be made. He complimented the body; and stated that Government looked favourably on it. Mr. Littleton had also expressed himself to the same effect; and had said, that there was no reasonable request from Synod, which Government would not feel disposed to grant. He (Mr. B.) would, therefore, advise, that resolutions should now be passed, expressive of the evils of the present system of inequality; and then, that application should be made, by memorial and deputation, for placing the lower classes on an equality with the first; and he had good grounds to hope, that their object would be obtained.

A Memorial to the Lord Lieutenant praying for the equalization of Bounty was adopted.

On reading the resolutions of last year respecting the National System of Education—

Mr. JOHN BROWN gave an account of the manner in which two deputations—the one to Dublin, and the other to London—had been got up, and had conducted the business assigned to them. He acknowledged that he had not summoned all the members of the Committee which had appointed the first Deputation; because he felt desirous of having a preponderance of those members who agreed with himself in opinion. He accused Mr. Carlisle of having obstructed the operations of both deputations; and especially on the last occasion, when he had suggested to Earl Grey to request the Deputation to produce their credentials.

Mr. STEWART said, he considered the charge implied in Earl GREY's letter, against the Deputation, to be nothing less than a charge of political swindling.

Doctor COOKE said, the charge was a grave one; and must fall heavily on him as well as Mr. Brown, if true. It was a charge not only of political swindling, as Mr. Stewart had said, but also of personal lying. He hoped that the Synod would take means to protect him from such imputations.

Mr. FERRIER, and the Rev. Mr. KIRKPATRICK declared, that though members of the Committee, they had never been summoned to attend the meeting which appointed this Deputation.

Mr. MORGAN had felt his mind much hurt, when a rumour reached Belfast, that Dr. Cooke and Mr. Browne had gone to London, without authority from this body, and yet had acted as if sent by the body. He was grieved to hear such a rumour, and especially when he feared that Mr. Carlile, a man whom he had loved and admired, might have been induced to make such a representation to Government. The circumstance was a most disagreeable one; and he was anxious that it might be set to rest. With this view he would ask Mr. Carlile a question, which, he hoped, might enable them to settle the matter in a Christian manner, and to the satisfaction of all parties. He would, therefore, just ask Mr. Carlile to be good enough to state, what it was that he did say? If he did not think proper to answer, the Synod would be bound to protect the two brethren. His affection for Mr. Carlile made him hope that he would simply state, what it was he said; and in this way, perhaps, the matter might pass over.

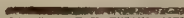
Mr. CARLILE, in a long speech, vindicated himself from the charges and insinuations which had been made against him. He also pointed out many irregularities of which the Synod's Committee had been guilty; and the improper manner in which the Deputation had acted, in several instances. His speech was frequently interrupted by loud and enthusiastic marks of approbation.

Mr. JOHN BROWN briefly explained some of the circumstances referred to by Mr. Carlile.

Doctor COOKE next addressed the house, in reply to Mr. Carlile. In one part of his address, he made a low attack upon that gentleman, but was prevented from proceeding with his scurrility, by a loud and protracted burst of indignation from all parts of the house; and it was not until after the Moderator and some of the members interfered, that he was enabled to proceed. He concluded, by supplicating the house not to condemn him; and bespeaking their mercy, by appealing to his former services in driving out the Arians.

Mr. STEWART, as a member of the Deputations, also explained and endeavoured to vindicate their conduct.

After a good deal of conversation, a resolution was finally agreed to, approving of the zeal with which the Deputations had performed their duty.



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SAUL.*

IN the history of the Hebrews and Israelites, the three principal means employed in effecting the purposes of Providence, are, invisible agency, national revolutions, and individuals selected as instruments.

I. Although we are members of a family under the continual superintendence of our Heavenly Father, and occupy a mansion framed by his power and skill, preserved and regulated by his paternal care and wisdom, we seem, in general, to be insensible of our situation. We find it difficult to maintain an habitual belief and sense, that the affairs of the world are under the guidance of Providence; yet when we reason on this subject, our speculations uniformly tend to that conclusion. This habitual indifference and inattention to a truth, which we occasionally admit on the most convincing evidence, is owing to the invisible operation by which the course of nature and plans of Providence, are conducted, and the mysterious and unaccountable nature of some of the divine dispensations.

Although, as far as we can discern, the Almighty always acts, with respect to us by subordinate ministers, some of them objects of sense, and some of them no doubt invisible, yet he always effects his plans by a silent and imperceptible agency: and although he is in his nature invariably and essentially holy and benevolent, yet many of the occurrences of this world appear to us inconsistent with this character, in which case even a pious mind is disposed rather to question the reality of providential interference, than the purity of the divine nature.

The invisible nature of the Deity and his agents, is a pregnant cause of scepticism and infidelity; for some will believe nothing but what they see, and others will

* For Eli and Samuel, see page 291.

pretend to discover and explain what is beyond the verge of human thought. One party would ascribe a perpetual inactivity to the Deity, and another would make him act in a manner unworthy his essential attributes.

II. There are certain grand principles of rectitude, which as far as our understandings enable us to form a judgment, are essential, independent, universal, and indispensable: and certainly are so with respect to us. It adds to their solemnity and importance to conceive, that they are equally binding on all other beings; and we have no reason to think otherwise. But the application of these general rules to particular cases, may be infinitely diversified. A different modification of mercy, compassion, and forgiveness, is required of a private person, from that which would be consistent with the duty of a magistrate. A parent may treat his child in a manner that would be unwarrantable in any other person; and the relation subsisting between a creature and a creator, may require and justify a course of conduct, which no creature would be justified in exercising toward another. Even from the imperfect apprehension that we have of this relation, we may easily comprehend, that whole nations may be extirpated to make way for a grand system of providential dispensations; and that one nation may be made the instrument of executing this decree, though otherwise not an individual would be warranted in hurting the hair of another's head; for the property of the Creator in his creatures is totally different from any dominion that one creature can claim over another. Yet—not to speak of our treatment of the brute creation—we think ourselves warranted in inflicting severity, partial suffering for general advantage; and even in devoting both ourselves and others to certain destruction, and waging sanguinary and desolating wars in a good and important cause. Now Providence acts on a larger scale for the attainment of a greater good, in more distant periods of time, and with a paramount and unquestionable right: for as the potter may make one vessel to honour and another to dishonour, and the smith forge his iron into an implement of war or an ornament of peace, so may the Almighty dispose of the destinies of nations. The history of the world is a tissue of these providential revolutions. All nations have afforded materials for these operations. But Scripture is the only professed history of Providence:

the only one that strips the veil from the invisible part of the creation, and exhibits the Creator and his ministers to the view of mortal men. Thus it illustrates both of those observations on Providence which I have mentioned: for it discloses the invisible operations of spiritual agents, and furnishes ample room for reflexion on the awful and mysterious course of the Divine government. There we see nations and individuals, princes and people, high and low, rich and poor, employed as agents in the divine economy.

III. Among these we have numerous instances of men raised from the lowest stations to act a distinguished part in this great drama; and while we are led by the more important incidents in their lives to reflect on the grand movements of this immense machine, we are further, by a circumstantial narrative, furnished with a rich and various fund of observation on their moral and religious conduct, and of the most valuable instruction conveyed in the most edifying and impressive form.

Among these eminent personages was Saul, the first king of Israel; and in the sequel of this essay I shall attempt to exhibit a view of his character; with a reference to these observations on the invisible and incomprehensible nature of providential operations, and the mode in which they are developed in Scripture history. In the course of it, it will also appear, how an humble and modest youth was elevated into a powerful monarch, and an eminent instrument in the hand of Providence, and an amiable, brave, and patriotic prince was transformed into a jealous, capricious, and sanguinary tyrant. It has been observed by writers, studious of human nature, that the virtue and the prosperity of every individual usually depend on a single propensity, taste, or passion, how diversified soever his conduct may appear; and long before this observation was made, the Apostle cautioned us to guard against the sin that doth most easily beset us. This observation is, I think, illustrated by the example of Saul.

It was either designed, or at least foreseen by the Jewish legislator, that when the people were settled in the promised land, they would be desirous to set a king over themselves, "like as all the nations about them." Nor was such an inclination condemned. On the contrary the duties of a king were distinctly laid down by Moses, and those particulars pointed out in

which he was most liable to err. The people were to choose one of their brethren, not a stranger; and he was to guard against luxury, pride, and avarice: he was also enjoined to write a copy of the law, and to read therein all his days: that his heart might not be lifted up above his brethren, and he turn not away from the commandment. Accordingly all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, and said unto him—Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations. And the thing displeased Samuel, because it appeared to be a revolt against the divine authority, and a criminal distrust of the divine protection. He, therefore, thought it his duty to set before them the tyranny and oppression which Eastern despots have always practised, and the consequent risk which they ran in changing their form of government. Nevertheless the people refused to hearken to the voice of Samuel; and they said, “Nay, but we will have a king to reign over us.”

A similar occurrence had taken place on a former occasion to the people of Shechem, and a similar caution had been given them by Jotham, in the parable of the trees, the oldest fable extant, calculated to show that the most worthless would be the most ambitious of succeeding to an elective monarchy. Judg. ix. 8.

Although we must suppose, that in this act the people were deficient in resignation and reliance on providence, yet we cannot refuse to admit that their constancy had been put to a pretty severe trial; for they were entirely defenceless, and subject to the most cruel oppression from their enemies.

There was no smith found throughout all Israel; for the Philistines said, lest the Hebrews make them swords or spears; but all the Israelites went down, every one, to the Philistines, to sharpen his share and his coulter, and his axe, and his mattock: yet they were allowed a file for the mattocks, and for the coulters, and for the forks, and for the axes, and to sharpen the goad.* So it came to pass in the day of battle, that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of all the people. The Ammonites were yet more cruel than the

* The treaty with Porsena, prohibited the Romans from all use whatsoever of iron, except in agriculture. *Niebuhr's Roman History*, p. 368, vol. 1.

Philistines: for Nahash the Ammonite answered the people of Jabish Gilead, "On this condition will I make a covenant with you, that I may thrust out all your right eyes." This demand was made, not only that he might lay a reproach on all Israel, but with the same policy that actuated the Philistines; for the loss of the right eye would effectually disable them from shooting with the bow; and as the left eye was usually covered by the shield, it would equally disqualify them from fighting with the spear, or sword and buckler. These, with the age of Samuel, and the incapacity of his sons, were the reasons that tempted the elders to demand a king, instead of depending on Jehovah to raise up a deliverer as heretofore. Accordingly Samuel, after his appeal to the whole congregation for the integrity of his own administration, which was received with universal applause, and leaving his sons in their hands, executed the commission which they had entrusted to him, by anointing Saul king.

Saul was a "choice young man, and a goodly, and taller than all the people from the shoulder upward." From the first incident in his life, he appears to have been a dutiful, affectionate son, and a youth of modesty and discretion. He had been sent by his father with a servant in quest of some asses that had gone astray, and after a long and fruitless search through the mountains and cities of Ephraim, "he said to the servant, come let us return; lest my father leave caring for the asses, and take thought for us." The servant proposed that they should rather consult Samuel; Saul was unwilling to trouble him as they had consumed their store, and had no suitable present. But when the servant had obviated this scruple, "he said, come, let us go. So they went unto the city where the man of God was." At this interview, Samuel, by a divine suggestion, used these remarkable words, "On whom is all the desire of Israel? Is it not on thee and on all thy father's house?" "And Saul answered, and said—Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? Wherefore, then, speakest thou so to me?" However, before they parted, Samuel anointed him, privately, king of Israel, preparatory to his public inauguration. On his return, he was questioned by his uncle concerning the cause of his journey, and more particularly his

conference with Samuel ; and Saul said to his uncle, "He told us plainly that the asses were found ;" but of the matter of the kingdom Saul prudently said not a word. His prudence was put to a severer test after his public election by lot at Mispeh ; for though the multitude at the first impulse, cried "God save the king," he was followed by only a band of men, whose hearts God had touched ; "but the the children of Belial said, how shall this man save us ? and they despised him and brought him no presents. But he held his peace."

When Saul, however, had surprised the Ammorites, and raised the siege of Jabesh Gilead ; the people with their usual fickleness said, "Who is he that said, 'shall Saul reign over us ?' Bring the men, that we may put them to death." And Saul, with a degree of prudence and magnanimity hardly to be expected in so young a man, said, "there shall not a man be put to death this day." They then proposed to march to Gilgal, where Saul was declared king before the Lord, and indeed no man could be better qualified for that station in such circumstances : for as he was a man of extraordinary courage and stature himself, so his son Jonathan became the most amiable, heroic, and blameless man of his age ; and Saul had the prudence, when he saw any strong or valiant man, to take him to him. Out of these he formed a permanent force of three thousand men ; two thousand he kept under his own immediate command in Michmash and Bethel ; and one thousand he stationed with his son Jonathan on Gibeah of Benjamine. By this arrangement, he was enabled, after some distinguished victories, to dismiss the people to their own homes.

On one occasion Saul and Jonathan had an opportunity of displaying that stern and heroic fortitude, which, whatever we may think of it in these days, raised the highest admiration among ancient nations, and particularly distinguished some of the most celebrated names among the Romans. That he might complete his victory over the Philistines, he had issued an order, accompanied with a curse, that none of his army should taste any food until the evening ; and it was afterwards discovered that Jonathan, who had not heard the orders, had refreshed himself with some honey in a wood, and finding himself strengthened, had encouraged some of the people, after he had been told of the curse, to follow his example, that they might the more resolutely prose-

cute the victory. When questioned by his father, he said, I did but taste a little honey with the end of the rod that was in my hand, and lo, I must die. And Saul said, the Lord do so, and more also, for thou shalt surely die, Jonathan. And the people said unto Saul, shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? God forbid! as the Lord liveth there shall not a hair of his head fall to the ground. So the people rescued Jonathan that he died not. Yet some time after, this same pious or superstitious, this inflexible and patriotic father, incurred the displeasure of Samuel, by sparing the life of Agag, king of the Amalekites, whom he had taken in battle.

On a former occasion, in which Saul had, through too great haste, transgressed against the laws of religion, by usurping the priest's office, Samuel had told him, that his kingdom should not continue; and that the Lord had sought him a man after his own heart, and the Lord had commanded him to be captain over his people; and now he repeats this interdiction, "that the Lord had rejected him from being king."

This was the crisis of Saul's character and fate. He has hitherto exhibited a character composed of filial duty, piety to God, mercy and magnanimity; and we shall see hereafter flashes of these virtues occasionally breaking from the gloom of his affliction, and the horrors of a perturbed mind. Through these afflictions and horrors we are now to trace him, that we may see the ruin that may be occasioned in a noble mind, by one unhappy passion. His was a spirit of jealousy and envy.

It does not appear that Saul had been much or permanently alarmed by the first threat of Samuel; but the circumstances of this second interview with him, seem to have taken a deep-rooted possession of his mind. From this moment his restless soul seems to have been in continual quest of the man, who was destined to succeed him on the throne; and was incessantly agitated by three furies, suspicion, jealousy, and envy; or in other words, "the spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him." The threat of Samuel weighed upon the spirits of Saul so heavily, as to occasion a degree of phrenzy; and he was so sensible of his situation, as to consent to the recommendation of his courtiers, that a person skilled in music should be provided to live in the king's family, to

relieve the occasional distraction of his mind by the charms of melody. By an extraordinary accident, or in consequence of his distinguished celebrity for musical talents, the person pitched upon was David. This was his first introduction at court, and he pleased the king so well by his musical and poetical powers, that he was appointed to a post about his person, and remained in the palace apparently insensible himself of his future destination, and without exciting the jealousy of Saul. The first symptom of this unhappy passion appeared on their triumphant return from the combat with Goliath; when the women coming out from the towns, met them on the high way, and formed themselves into two bands, singing alternate parts of a triumphant song. One chorus chanted, "Saul hath slain his thousands;" and the other responded, "and David his ten thousands." This immediately set the distracted brain of Saul at work, and he began to suspect, that "the neighbour of his, who was better than he," and who, Samuel had declared, should be captain over Israel, might be David. "What can he have more," said he, "but the kingdom?" "And Saul eyed David from that day forward."

Saul had promised his eldest daughter in marriage to the man, who should kill Goliath, and now he prepared to fulfil his promise. This may seem inconsistent with his suspicions, and envy of David; but so fertile is a perverted mind in wicked resources, that he converted this enviable and even dangerous promotion of David into a mean for his destruction. He even proposed the match himself, while David was so far from demanding or soliciting an alliance with the king, that he could hardly believe the proposal to be serious; especially as it was the custom, in ancient times, for the bridegroom to give a portion suited to her rank, to the father of his bride, and he was but a shepherd boy. "Saul said unto David, behold my elder daughter, Merab, her will I give thee to wife; only be valiant, and fight the Lord's battles: for Saul said, let not my hand be upon him; but let the hands of the Philistines be upon him." Such, however, is the irresolution of jealousy, that when the time for the marriage arrived, he could not think of bestowing his eldest daughter on his supposed rival, and perhaps, to mortify him, gave her to Adriel. The same plan, however, was renewed in the person of Michal, his second daughter, who had fixed her affections

on David; for Saul consented to the match, saying, "I will give her unto him, that she may be a snare to him." He accordingly required, as a dowry, that David should put to death a hundred Philistines; for he thought to make him fall by the hands of the enemy. He was now so far involved in this degrading passion, that he condescended privately to employ his own servants to solicit David to ask for his daughter. But David slew the Philistines, and Michal afterwards preserved his life from assassins employed by her father.

Another expedient of the same kind, was to give David a military command; a measure apparently inconsistent with his hatred and his fears; but this he did with the same wicked and fruitless hope, that he should fall a victim to his zeal and courage. The reader will recollect that this was the infamous expedient to which David himself resorted against Uriah, under the influence of another sinful passion.

Saul having thus exhausted all those arts by which he might destroy David, without the disgrace and danger of employing accomplices, at last proceeded to solicit his son, Jonathan, and his own servants, to murder him, from which he was apparently reclaimed by the expostulations of Jonathan. On a second occasion he again descended so low as to expose his base designs to his own son; and on his remonstrance, attempted to kill Jonathan with his javelin, which he constantly carried, after the manner of ancient kings, for a sceptre.

In consequence of these machinations of Saul, which were communicated to David by his friend Jonathan, and two attempts to transfix David himself with his javelin, while he was entertaining him with his harp, David fled to the desert country, and formed a band of men for his protection. This excited the fears of Saul to such a degree, that he adopted open hostilities, and employed the remainder of his life in pursuing David through the mountains.

His adventures during this inglorious warfare, and the singular magnanimity which prompted David twice to spare his life; with the infamous and atrocious massacre of Abimelech, and eighty-five priests, on a groundless suspicion of favouring David, and in defiance of proof to the contrary, are too long to make it possible, and too well known to render it necessary, to recount them. If any thing can heighten the idea

which these ignoble arts and inhuman atrocities give us of the misery to which Saul was reduced by this tormenting passion, it is the humiliation and remorse which it occasioned; the horror that drove him to consult the sorceress, and the despair that made him the instrument of his own death. Though he had, in his better days, banished the witches out of the land, he became the voluntary dupe of one of these impostors.* and though the act of desperation with which he closed his life, was esteemed a proof of magnanimity, and even philosophy, among the heathens, it was perpetrated among the Jews only by such unhappy wretches as Ahitophel, Saul, and Judas, and is justly execrated and despised under the Christian dispensation. Our sublime Poet, whose description of the creation will last to the dissolution of the world, and whose *Paradise Lost* will endure till *Paradise* be regained, ascribes the desperate proposal of self-murder to the infirmity of Eve, and over-rules it by the firmness, fortitude, and piety of Adam.

Without descending to other particulars, the misery of this unfortunate prince is sufficiently evinced by his forlorn state as described in his speech to his own servants, and by his humiliating confession and supplication to the object of his jealousy and envy. "Saul said unto his servants that stood about him,—Hear now, ye Benjamites; will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards, and make you all captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds, that all of you have conspired against me; and there is none that sheweth me that my son hath made a league with the son of Jesse, and there is none of you that is sorry for me, or

* The story of the Witch of Endor derives its importance only from the ridicule upon scripture of which it has been made the vehicle. The truth of such stories as this, is not in the slightest degree connected with the truth of revelation; and if it were, there is nothing in this passage which asserts the appearance of the Ghost of Samuel, if liberally interpreted. As to the Witch of Endor, the historian does not say that Saul saw any thing. He applied to a pretended witch, who was, no doubt, apprised of the approach of such a remarkable visitor, and of his business, as such persons usually are, especially as Saul had sent his servants to seek him out a woman that used a familiar spirit, and was distinguished by his rank and stature. She asked whom he wished to appear. He said Samuel. The woman then pretended to see Samuel; and described his figure, which satisfied Saul that she had seen him. The person who personated Samuel, who probably did not appear at all, asked Saul, "Why hast thou disquieted me?" and so the conversation proceeded without any personal interview, and without any thing preternatural in the manner or substance.

showeth unto me, that my son hath stirred my servant against me, to lie in wait as at this day." And all this although he knew that Jonathan, as heir to the crown, had even greater cause to fear and resist the supposed pretensions of David, than himself; for on a former occasion he had said to Jonathan, "As long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom." The other proof of his unhappy state of mind, occurred after David had, the second time, spared his life, and had made known the particulars to Saul himself, from a distance: "Is this thy voice, my son David?—and Saul lifted up his voice, and wept. Thou art more righteous than I, for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil! Blessed be thou, my son David: thou shalt both do great things, and also still prevail. And now I well know, that thou shalt surely be king. Swear now that thou wilt not cut off my seed after me."

It would be endless to enlarge on the instructive strokes of character, which occur in the life of Saul. What has now been said will be sufficient to put us on our guard against the growth of a jealous, envious, and suspicious temper, which is a canker that eats into the very core of the heart, poisons all the springs of human happiness, is fatal to our hopes of enjoyment in every relation, and most deadly in the dearest.

ERASMUS.

REMARKS UPON THE ATHANASIAN CREED.

YOUR readers will probably have heard of the Essay on Spirit, which was supposed to have been written by Bishop Clayton. It is a statement and vindication of Unitarian principles—To this there was afterwards published a "Sequel," "being the result of a fair and serious inquiry concerning a very important doctrine of the Christian Religion as delivered in the Sacred Scriptures, with some observations relating to the Athanasian and Nicene creed." As this Pamphlet is not very common, I have selected from it the "Remarks on the Athanasian Creed and the injunction for reading it in our churches." "The Rubrick enjoins that this Creed (which is there called The Confession of our Christian Faith) should be recited so many times a year by the Minister and People, in all congregations of the established Church.

I have at my leisure examined this Creed, and considered it with some care. Though I am not inclined to pass any harsh censure upon it, yet I hope I may have liberty to say, that I do not find it answers the title given it, *The Confession of our Christian faith.*

“As to the Christian Faith (a point of high concern) it may perhaps be justly doubted, whether the giving this Creed so honourable a title, doth not diminish the honour of that excellent Faith which appears to me, in a light every way more amiable than that in which this creed represents it. I am free enough to own, that I pay no regard to creeds or confessions, any further than I can find them to be founded on Scripture, taken in its plainest and most obvious sense, and such as I can suppose to be most agreeable to the design of Revelation. And therefore my way has been, in any case of difficulty, first to have recourse to Scripture, to see and inquire what that says, and to form my judgment from thence: And then, next to compare our common confessions with it, and examine them by it. This Confession, upon such examination and comparison, appears to me in a light that I can very little approve. But, whatever be my private sentiments about it, they are of less concern, in comparison of its being made a public criterion of Christian’s belief, and enjoined to be professed as such in Christian assemblies. Were it an affair of small moment, a point of private speculation only, or a subject confined to the discussion of the schools, I should perhaps have no objection to it, or none but what I might be willing enough to suppress, rather than divulge. But when it is made every one’s concern to declare to it to be his faith, in the most solemn manner, in the places of Christian worship, and to condemn those who cannot join in it (which I believe may be the case of great numbers of very serious Christians) this, I own, puts me upon new reflections, and always gives me pain, whenever I think of it.

“The assertion, I suppose, would not be altogether groundless, if one was to say, that this system is not so agreeable to Scripture as many have undertaken to maintain. It is perhaps, in several instances, very different from it, to say nothing that may be more offensive. I would observe next, that it wants that plainness and simplicity, which seems to be best adapted for Christian worship, and without which there can be

very little edifying, especially in unlearned congregations, for which this confession seems to be quite unfit, having in it so many difficulties both in point of sentiment and of language: Inasmuch that I have sometimes wondered to find a learned writer suggest, That every verse in this creed is plain and agreeable to reason. Which I own does not appear to me, and I suppose few will acknowledge.

“But what led me chiefly into my present reflections upon this creed, is my observing its great uncharitableness; being so extremely severe against all who may be of a different judgment (though that judgment, by the way, may happen sometimes to be better founded upon Scripture than some declarations here;) and consequently being in my opinion, less proper to be pronounced indiscriminately by mixed multitudes; who, as they may be supposed for the most part to understand little or nothing of the declarations which they utter, must for that reason be very incompetent judges concerning the final state of their fellow-creatures, and certainly are very ill qualified, nor have indeed any just authority, to pass the dire sentence of damnation upon them. This custom, though made to be a religious one, yet has, I am afraid, an irreligious effect, being probably a means of habituating too many to great uncharitableness in judging, as well as forwardness in damning; both which, though very bad qualities, are observed to be very common in this land.

“Let us consider the matter a little further, casting our eye once more upon the rubric.

“This confession shall be sung or said by the Minister and People. The minister and people must be supposed to be sure, that every thing they say or sing, as contained in this creed, is true, and is delivered in the word of God, or most certainly warranted by it. Else how can they say or sing it? and affirm the whole to be certain? Whether this be always the case, or be the case in one of a thousand of our common congregations, including all that rehearse or chant it, may deserve to be considered: and it seems to be a matter well worthy of consideration. For reciting and averring, in such strong terms, either without sufficient information, or without sufficient conviction, can scarce be thought excusable, cannot at all be pronounced justifiable, in a concern of this moment, by those who will consider it with due at-

tention. Few comparatively bestow the pains they should do, in considering things of this nature. And the matter is indeed difficult to resolve and be assured of, with sufficient evidence. Which resolution and assurance are nevertheless necessary, in order to a free and open declaration, such as our church requires. For what kind of declaration is it, that is grounded upon no assurance or resolution? If it be not a just and rational assurance, it is none at all, and the declaration in fact may be worse than none. The doctrine of the holy Trinity, as revealed in the Scriptures, is undeniable ; and no one that believes those Scriptures, can contest it. But a creed consisting of so many unscriptural phrases, and metaphysical distinctions, relating to this glorious Trinity, which is as much above our explication as it is above our comprehension, may well be called to the test, and ought to be thoroughly considered, before it is repeated. Is this really the case, with respect to the infinite number of people, that join in our church assemblies, and are directed and required to repeat it?

“Now when you add to this, that other observation, that how little soever men may have considered this subject, yet they are very peremptory in their declarations upon it, not only concerning the certainty of every article they rehearse, but also concerning the destruction of those who cannot join in rehearsing it ; when this, I say, is observed, and seriously considered, it makes the matter still more deplorable, and should therefore the more excite our compassion and concern.

“I could wish with all my heart, that this matter were considered by proper judges : and considered in such a manner, and to so desirable an effect, as to remove a rock of offence, upon which numbers have split, and which instead of saving, may be a means of destroying a multitude of souls, for whom Christ died. If thy Christian brother, forming the best judgment he can, in the sincerity of his heart, be grieved with, and justly offended at thy creed ; walkest thou now charitably, by enjoining this creed to be repeated by him? Destroy not him with thy creed, for whom Christ died. Let us not therefore judge, much less condemn one another any more, as we too presumptuously and too uncharitably do in this creed, and as we are commanded to do by the rubric that enjoins it. Let us judge this rather, that no man, no, not the greatest of men, put a stumbling-block

or an occasion to fall, in his brother's way. A most terrifying consideration to those who know, and will duly consider what the terrors of the Lord be. I earnestly wish, and beg of God, that those who cannot but know, may have the heart to consider; and that, having compassion on the people, as our blessed Lord had, and wills them also to have, they would deliver them from a snare, which they too fatally run into, and which endangereth their souls, when they know not what they say, nor whereof they affirm. Ye honorable and gracious rulers of the Christian world, consider what you are doing, or what you are permitting to be done. Your people are permitted, if not enjoined, to damn one another, without knowing why, or upon what condition they do it; and yet no man layeth it to heart. Will not this one day be laid to your charge? and will not these ignorant people rise up in judgment against you, who are not ignorant? If many of you disapprove of this creed yourselves, can you have the heart to enjoin it upon others, even upon the most ignorant and most profligate of your people? Can you yourselves stand by this creed, stand by every article of it, at the solemn audit, and affirm that you did right in enjoining it upon your inferiors? Let this creed be sung or said, by the minister and people. Who enjoins this, or who requireth it at our hands? The Lord Jesus never did. His Apostles never did. Those are to answer for it, who do enjoin it. For they ought to know that it is true; and if they do not know this, or are not fully persuaded of it, how can they justify their enjoining it? The decision must be left to the latter day; when all shall appear and give account, before the judgment-seat of Christ. To that awful tribunal must be referred, all the mysterious determinations, and all the multiplied injunctions, of the present day!"

ON ELECTION AND REPROBATION.

"WHAT good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?" was a question proposed on a certain occasion to our Saviour. It was a question of the most interesting and important nature, and it concerns every individual of the present day as much as it concerned the individual who asked it, clearly to understand upon what terms, or by the performance of what duties, eternal

happiness may be obtained and enjoyed by believers in the gospel of Christ Jesus. Information respecting a point of such magnitude, was what the young man whom the Evangelist mentioned wished to know; and therefore our Saviour answered his enquiry in a direct and plain manner, by shewing him the absolute necessity of observing the laws of religion and morality, that he might be prepared for the enjoyment of eternal happiness. On another occasion when he was asked "Are there few that be saved?" the question was different from what the youth proposed, and as different was the answer of our Saviour. The one originated in a vain, idle, and impertinent curiosity, intent upon what the individual should have had no concern about, for which reason it got no satisfactory answer, because a reply in point to such a question could have served no religious, moral, or useful purpose, either to the individual who made the inquiry, or to mankind in general. Instead of gratifying a vain curiosity, intent upon what did not concern the individual, our Saviour, agreeably to his usual manner of communicating instruction, gave a salutary advice to all who heard him. "Strive to enter in at the strait gate, for many shall seek to enter in and shall not be able;" as if our Lord had said, "Be not inquisitive, nor perplex yourselves with unnecessary inquiries about the number of those who will hereafter be happy, but endeavour by your conduct to have yourselves enrolled in that number. Were I to satisfy your curiosity by unfolding to you the book of life, and shewing you the names of the individuals who are therein enrolled, would it have the most distant tendency to secure your own happiness, or qualify you for the enjoyment of future bliss? No, surely. If you would enter into life, keep the commandments. If you wish to be happy hereafter, here you must be holy in heart and life, candid in your inquiry to become wise unto salvation, and earnest in your endeavours to perform the will of your Father in heaven. The necessity of these exertions arises out of the nature and circumstances of the present state of discipline and trial. The gate of Christianity is strait, and the way to happiness is narrow. The profession of my religion at present will expose men to difficulty, distress, and danger. But living as it directs will not subject you to melancholy fear concerning your eternal salvation, while careless wishes, barren zeal, and

feeble exertions will be unavailing for securing to you eternal happiness. It will not be sufficient merely to seek, you must ardently strive. All the powers of your understanding and will must be on the stretch of industry and care in working out your salvation. If you be indolent and careless, cowardly and slothful, you cannot be my disciples, you cannot practice pure and undefiled religion, you cannot finally obtain eternal happiness. You may seek to enter in at the strait gate of Christianity; but what will it avail, if you draw back, when you see the temporal advantages which you must relinquish, and the hardships which you must endure, in supporting its cause? If such be your character, you are unqualified, you may be said to *seek* to be happy, but you are not able to accomplish your object, because you cannot reconcile yourselves to the terms of the gospel."

In writing to you upon this subject, I endeavoured to remove some difficulties which have been entertained respecting the small number of those who shall be saved, and the portions of scripture which have been brought to prove such a melancholy doctrine, have a different meaning. I will endeavour to prove that the small number which some maintain are predestined to eternal life, and the multitudes whom the Father of mercy hath doomed to eternal destruction, is a doctrine unreasonable and inconsistent with the spirit of Christianity. That in the government of God over his rational accountable creatures, there is an undistinguishing predestination of some to happiness and others to misery, appears to be a doctrine most dangerous in its consequences. It has a tendency to encourage universal indolence and inactivity in the important concerns of religion and morality. Why should any person take much pains about a holy religious life, who cannot completely ascertain that he is in the blissful predestinated catalogue? If the election of God be unconditional, having no regard to the moral conduct of man, why should present enjoyment be sacrificed, by keeping up a continual warfare with our spiritual enemies? Denying ourselves, taking up our cross and following our Saviour, upon such a principle, would be unmeaning and vain. "To eat and drink, for to-morrow we die," would be more reasonable conduct, because our fate was irrevocably determined by our Creator, without respect to our conduct in the day of our merciful visitation. This doctrine is

clothed with gloom, and must ever be the parent of melancholy to the reflecting mind. It has a tendency to keep those who believe it all their days in doubt, uncertainty, and distraction, about the concerns of futurity. If from eternity God has chosen a determinate number as vessels of honour, and doomed all the rest to destruction, who can possibly ascertain to which class he may belong, or what certainty can he have, that he is not in the list of those whom it hath pleased his Creator to reprobate? In this creed, predestination is productive of the most melancholy reflections. "Secret things belong to God, but revealed things to us and our children, that we may do the works of his law." And as the decrees of our Creator is a subject removed beyond the investigation of the human understanding, it is inconsistent with our duty and our happiness, to occupy our time or disturb our peace by such an unprofitable study.

Our principal care is to consult the will of God, which is clearly revealed to us in scripture. From this source, and through this channel, we can form a correct judgment, concerning the safety or the danger of our future condition. Whatever general promises we find there made to mankind, through Jesus Christ, these we are warranted to apply to ourselves, so far as we perform the conditions of them. On the contrary, whatever threatenings we find denounced against the impenitent workers of iniquity, to these we are to consider ourselves obnoxious, if we come up to that character, if we do not earnestly endeavour to prevent the direful effect, by sincere repentance and timely reformation; receiving the decrees of God in this light, which makes them perfectly consistent with his justice, righteousness, and mercy, and with our condition as accountable creatures, who in future will be rewarded or punished according to the manner in which we have spent the season of our merciful visitation. From the beginning he has decreed to eternal bliss all who obey the laws of pure and undefiled religion, which he has established and revealed to mankind; but he has reprobated to wretchedness and woe, all who live in a criminal violation of his commandments. In examining the scriptures, the unerring rules of faith and practice of Christians, we acquire the only satisfactory information, respecting our future condition. This is the best way to

secure our comfort and establish our hope, and not by prying with an inquisitive, vain, and presumptuous curiosity, into the nature of divine decrees, which are neither calculated for sources of consolation, nor rules of moral conduct. Are we desirous to obtain peace of conscience, and free from unreasonable anxiety concerning our eternal condition? Our inquiry should not be whether we belong to a favourite number, which Almighty God from all eternity did absolutely and unconditionally decree to salvation, and who cannot possibly miscarry. This would be an absurd method of proceeding to gain the end. Consult the gospel. Observe the manifestation of God's kindness, and his declarations of mercy and love to the human race in general. The express language of the Saviour, who taught the truth of God, is plain and unqualified upon this subject. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." On this one text alone we may rest all the knowledge and all the comfort of which we are in pursuit. Let all examine whether their faith in Christ makes him love them, and whether their love to him inclines them to keep his commandments. This knowledge may be easily acquired by attending to the disposition of the heart, and the general tenor of the life and conversation.

If love to God and good will to one another be the end at which we aim, then are we the friends of our Saviour, and our sincere endeavours to gain eternal happiness will be blessed, and in his abundant mercy he will accept of us in Christ Jesus. Thus anxiety and fear will be banished from our minds respecting eternal election and predestination. Everlasting life will be the portion of all who have been faithful unto death. Let none be solicitous in enquiring whether God hath decreed a particular number to future glory, in exclusion to all the rest of the human race; and if he hath done so, whether the individual be of that number. An object of greater importance claims the consideration of every one; that is, the faithful discharge of the duties incumbent upon every rational and accountable creature, in making his calling and election sure. In this manner we work out our salvation, for God will never elect any to eternal life who are depraved in principle, and profligate in conduct; nor will he reprobate to everlasting

destruction any one who sincerely endeavours to practise piety and holiness. If we would exert ourselves in the cause of religion, fervently pray for divine wisdom to direct us, and grace to support us in times of temptation and trial, we may rest assured that divine assistance will not be withheld; grace will always be sufficient to enable us to encounter and overcome the enemies of our salvation, and our reward at last will be glorious. God never decrees a good man to misery, because such procedure would be inconsistent with his glorious perfections. He never withholds the assistance of his holy spirit from those who sincerely ask it. God will never sentence a virtuous man to future misery, because, agreeably to the constitution of his righteous government, it is impossible for the heart free from the power of vice and impiety, ever to become the victim of wretchedness. God cannot decree any thing contrary to his pure, holy, and perfect nature, and to speak of decrees in any such manner is presumption and impiety. "God is love." Benevolent and kind to all his creatures, "his tender mercies are on all his other works." Could any person reconcile the opinion with common sense, the natural feeling of the human mind, and the plain declarations of the Bible, that mankind should be called by the gospel of Jesus Christ, to practice holiness here, preparatory to happiness hereafter; and that something should prevent them from future bliss, by a decree from the best of Beings, who hath solemnly declared, that he desires not the death of him that dieth, but would rather that all would come to repentance and live. "Far be it from God to do wickedly, or the Almighty that he should pervert judgment." Human misery cannot be chargeable, in the smallest degree, upon a benevolent and holy God, who delights in the happiness of his creatures, and hath sent his son to redeem them.

Suppose the contrary for a moment, and you rob him of his adorable perfections, and make him a being whom we contemplate with horror. No man ever was or ever will be miserable, but through his own improper conduct, and if men would exercise the same prudence and activity in religion, which they do in the common concerns of life for the purpose of self-preservation and present enjoyment, they would never become victims of future misery. Many cannot bear the thought of their own exertions, that any thing is necessary on their part in

the work of their salvation. They resolve all God's dealings with mankind into his sovereign will and supreme power, so that whoever is to be saved must be saved by his irresistible grace without any need of their own hearty concurrence and vigorous co-operation. In observing the order of nature, in carefully consulting the Bible, and attending to the doctrine of our Saviour, we find this is not the method which God employs to bring mankind to happiness. It is true that all things in this world come to pass according to divine permission. But it is equally true that God hath so arranged and determined matters that full scope may be given to the exercise of powers and abilities which he hath implanted in the human constitution. The divine decree is such, that it is a fixed unalterable principle that man is an accountable being, and will be happy or miserable hereafter according to the manner in which he spends his days of grace and season of acceptance. From the beginning God placed happiness and misery before mankind in the different religious dispensations, and decreed that all who would make choice of life upon the proposed terms, and faithfully fulfil those terms, should certainly enjoy it. Thus we have a liberty of choice and power of acting in consequence of it; and whoever uses this liberty, and exercises this power in fulfilling the duties of religion is certainly elected, and whoever does the contrary is as certainly cast away. He that sins because grace hath abounded, and rejects mercy in his day of acceptance, divine justice will reject him at the last day. These few thoughts contain all that I can understand by the decrees of heaven, and they seem sufficient to satisfy our doubts, to remove our fears, and to excite our industry. Nothing will prevent our salvation, if our endeavours be sincere; if we fail in obtaining happiness, we make the decree ourselves, and our Creator is not chargeable with the cause of our misery. To be the faithful follower of Jesus is the best proof any one can give that he is chosen of God. Convinced that nothing will prevent us from obtaining eternal happiness by means of election and predestination, let all strive to enter in at the strait gate. Let all exert every faculty in the glorious cause of securing eternal happiness and working out their own salvation. Had such endeavours not been necessary, and were it possible that they would not be successful, can we imagine that our Saviour would

ever have exhorted us to use them? He would not certainly have admonished us to strive, if at last all our striving would have been in vain. Though our best services are blended with imperfection, the sincerity of the heart and goodness of the disposition will find gracious acceptance with that Being who knows our frame, and remembers we are dust.

In attending to the admonition of our Saviour when he says, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate, for many shall seek to enter in and shall not be able;" let us understand the latter part of the verse as pointed against the indolent, lukewarm, indifferent professor of Christianity who neglects to perform the duties of religion until a more convenient season. Our Lord does not say that many shall *strive*, but that many shall *seek* to enter in. The one is a stronger expression, and carries greater weight with it than the other. To *strive* implies a hearty and powerful endeavour; to *seek* denotes a *feeble pursuit*, a *languid attention*, a *listless longing*. In Scripture, where two expressions are contrasted, the one conveys the idea of firm and fervent exertion, the other the idea of attempts in which there is some degree of indifference as to their failure or success. In the spiritual warfare, none ever strove to no purpose. But many seek for happiness, by idle wishes and barren resolutions, neglecting the performance of their duty, and the consequence will be, that all their faith and hope will profit them nothing. On this point the Apostle Paul is clear and decisive. He informs us that he kept his body under the control of steady self-government. His faith was strong and founded upon the clearest conviction, that we may believe he had no doubt of its continuance, and yet if we believe his own words, he thought it possible that he might be cast away. Had he believed that his election and calling was of an absolute nature, that independent of his own vigorous endeavours, he was irresistibly impelled to good, and restrained from evil, how could he express any fear of criminal indulgence preventing his eternal salvation? Such an apprehension is directly exposed to every idea of absolute election and reprobation. He had no doubt of the extraordinary measure of the divine favour, which was bestowed upon him, and yet he appears to believe that his election was not so certain but that he might fall, through the prevalence of appetite and passion, if not properly restrained

by his own exertion. His own language is the best comment upon the subject. "But I keep my body under, and bring it into subjection, lest by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be cast away."

Christianity pure and undefiled evinces itself not in gloomy moroseness, but in benevolence to the children of men. It represents the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, not as a capricious tyrant, but a God of love; and makes its way to the candid mind and sincere heart, with kindness to man, the image of his Creator. The religion of Christ views all men as the Children of the Father who is in heaven, created by him, to be happy in time and in eternity, and inspires the soul with innocence, love, and gratitude to Him, the eternal fountain of mercy.

Melancholy is the thought, that the gospel of the divine Saviour which proclaims peace on earth and good will to men, the soother of human misery and woe, which promises rest to them who labour and are heavy laden, should ever have been contrasted by men professing themselves the ministers of religion. That the cup of mercy, which a God of love who is unwilling that any should perish, and the benevolence of a Saviour who tasted death for every man, should ever have been mingled with the bitter ingredient of the unscriptural doctrine of eternal reprobation, would exceed all belief, had we not sufficient evidence that such a doctrine is taught among us. This is one of the leading doctrines of the established churches. Ministers are not ashamed to assume the character of Judge of their fellow-creatures, and pass sentence of condemnation upon their brethren who differ from them in religious opinion, and yet, "passing strange," they claim the title of Evangelists. So did not Paul. To an enlarged mind, a cultivated understanding, and kind benevolent disposition, nothing can be more painful, than that the doctrine of absolute predestination should have been drawn (for it certainly would not have freely come) from the word of God, which in the most unqualified language expressly declares that Christ died for all men. Could that be even a certain number by a fixed decree from all eternity doomed to everlasting misery?

Viewing the vast extent of divine love and acceptance, may our tempers be sweetened, our severe judgments corrected, and our benevolent affections expanded towards

all men who may differ from ourselves upon speculative points of religion. The character will determine the final doom of man. The upright mind and sincere heart, that is free from malice, envy, and ill-feeling, has a fund of happiness, and enjoys that peace which this world can neither give nor take away, and will be prepared for the inheritance of the saints, in the blessed abode of eternal happiness.

I have now finished my long letter, and candidly given you my views of the doctrine of election and reprobation; if you think them worthy of a place in your liberal publication, you may insert them; should you be of a contrary opinion, the writer will not resent it. I most unequivocally disavow any name but the name *Christian*. I take the *Bible* and the *Bible* only, for my rule of faith and conduct. "I believe in one God, and one mediator between God and man—the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all: that there is no salvation in any other, and the doctrines which I believe are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone."

I remain yours most sincerely,

ANN.

PULPIT HINTS TO A YOUNG MINISTER.

PERSONAL Demeanour.

BE punctual to the time appointed, and the people will be so too; otherwise both will become late and irregular.

Proceed to the pulpit gravely and deliberately, not casting your eyes around the house, nor noticing any one in the pews; neither hurrying nor sauntering, neither strutting nor tripping along the aisle.

Do not continue sitting in the pulpit till the people begin to wonder what you can be doing. The first psalm will afford ample time to compose yourself for prayer.

In general avoid unnecessary delays in the intervals of the service, as if only then selecting a chapter or a text.

Be the first to rise for prayer; but wait till the people are settled, and then begin with an audible voice.

The words used in introducing the psalms, the prayers, and the text, should be simple, without any affectation of variety. Those introducing the lesson should be so general as to accord with its subject, whatever it may be.

If the lines of the psalm be given out by the clerk, you will read the first two; otherwise that practice is unnecessary and unmeaning.

Avoid theatrical gesticulations or postures, and rhetorical utterance. Let your gestures be easy and gentle, but occasionally impressive and emphatical. More than this is seldom becoming in extemporary preachers, altogether inconsistent in one who reads his sermons, and particularly offensive in prayer.

Affect no foppish or fashionable manner, nor pompous or sanctimonious airs.

DELIVERY.

Let the whole service be distinctly audible. Fix your eye occasionally upon the most distant person in the house, and you will naturally pitch your voice so as to be heard by him; but always keep within your compass. Bear in mind that many of your people are dull of hearing, either from age or infirmity, and that very many are negligent and inattentive. If any of these find difficulty in hearing they will cease to listen, and employ their thoughts upon some other subject.

The subjects of prayer naturally call for different tones, but they should all be distinctly heard, especially invocation and adoration.

Let the book, chapter and verse of the Lessons, and the number of the psalms be audibly pronounced; with any notices that are to be delivered from the pulpit. The proper time for these is before the last psalm. Read none from the pulpit that do not relate to your own religious connexion.

Be particular, also, in announcing your text, with the book, chapter and verse, twice. If by any accidental negligence or noise any one may not have heard it, the whole sermon will appear to him confused and unintelligible. It should also be introduced, once at least, in your discourse. The omission of these particulars disappoints those hearers who have their bibles and psalm-books at hand, or wish to refer to the text in the afternoon.

Read the psalms with suitable expression. Scripture should not be read as in private, but more deliberately and impressively, especially the didactic and prophetic books.

False emphasis perverts the sense, and frequent stress upon insignificant words has a ludicrous effect.

In reading scripture and quoting texts as authorities, make no alterations without due notice, and giving the original as well as the explanatory word.

Give out the text with solemnity; not as a motto, or a topic to suggest a few *remarks* or *observations*, or as a subject of *entertainment* for the audience, as is sometimes done.

Cultivate a talent for preaching and praying without notes, at least occasionally; but if you read, do it openly; any attempt at concealment will be equally fruitless and disreputable.

Occasionally address yourself to different parts of the audience, and look your hearers in the face.

SUBJECT MATTER.

A sermon is a *speech* to be delivered to an audience of a particular description: keep this in mind while you are writing, and you will not compose a tract or essay instead of an animated exhortation, or a sacred oration.

Every sermon should be scriptural and moral. If chiefly moral, it should have a scriptural introduction: if chiefly scriptural it should have a moral application; and your morality should be always enforced by scriptural motives.

Preach agreeably to your own mature convictions, freely and faithfully, without alluding to conflicting doctrines or existing controversies.

Abound in lecturing and expounding.

Let the whole service harmonise with the sermon. Let there at least be no discordance among the parts. The text, when convenient, should be part of the lesson. A penitential prayer should not be followed by a psalm of joy and exultation, nor an awful and awakening sermon by a psalm of confidence and assurance. The concluding prayer should correspond with the strain of the discourse, without servilely following its order, or repeating its words. This is a most important part of the service, and should never be omitted or stinted.

If you dislike formal heads, although they are excellent helps to memory, let your divisions be distinctly marked.

When the speaker is in unison with his hearers, he may say and do many things with applause, which would otherwise only expose him to ridicule. To gain and retain this sympathetic unison is the secret of popular eloquence. While this is maintained, the enthusiast may hazard what he will ; when it ceases, he may cease ranting.

Compose regularly and perseveringly till you have a sufficient stock. If you be ever known to preach a borrowed sermon, you will never get credit for the best of your own.

Seldom write a series of sermons on one subject. "On a former occasion," or "in a late discourse," is a great damper to the attention of modern hearers, especially irregular attenders. It is better to repeat an old sermon, than to use any artifice to make it appear new.*

Accommodate your style to your people; but avoid bad taste and vulgarity.

When speaking in the first person, use the singular and not the plural number, as is often done. This appears like false modesty, or as if you were reading a periodical composed by several hands. You should occasionally address your hearers as brethren, friends, fellow-christians, or other scriptural expressions, to keep them in mind that you are speaking to them.

Lastly know when to stop, and quit when you have done.†

Avoid the presumption of introducing controverted points in addresses to the Most High; and intruding our ignorance and dissensions upon the ear of the One infinitely wise and good.

Let not your prayers be interspersed with cant phrases, and obscure and mysterious texts, merely because they have been current in the pulpit. Address nothing to the Divine Being or to your people, that you do not understand and believe.

Introduce the first prayer by some suitable text, or other premonitory words. This is particularly advisable when the service begins with prayer.

In your intercessory prayer, never neglect the admonition of St. Paul, (Tim. ii. 2.) to pray for kings and all

* A congregation in Dublin, now extinct, used to complain of their ministers—that the one had too many sermons to one text; and the other too many texts to the same sermon.

† An old woman being asked how she liked a certain preacher, replied, "I dinna like him ava, for he aye quat when he had dane."

in authority ; avoiding all allusion to politics. The omission of this is a just cause of offence to the pious, and suspicion to the well-affected.

Avail yourself of opportunities to attend popular preachers, though differing from you in doctrine and forms. Your strain of preaching may thus be improved, and many prejudices abated.

In celebrating the communion, or Lord's supper, (sacrament is not a scriptural term,) the words of institution, the thanksgiving, and the distribution of bread and wine, should not be mixed up with the exhortations, which are no part of the ordinance.

The preparatory discourses may abound with instruction, encouragement, and warning ; but these are surely out of place when the communicants are already seated. The exhortations at the table should be mild, tender, and brief, John xiv. xv. xvi. The prayer should consist only in giving thanks and asking a blessing. Mat. xxvi, 26, 27. Mark xiv. 22, 23. Luke xxii. 19. 1 Cor. xi. 24.

Whenever you pray for virtuous and holy dispositions, let it be through the grace of God ; thus, may we by thy grace, or, through thy blessing, be or (become) temperate, &c. &c.

Never make your pulpit subservient to court influence, or popular discontent.

CONCLUSION.

The frequent use of the Lord's Prayer occasions it to be pronounced with too little reverence ; but it should be recited with particular solemnity. There are different ways of repeating the fifth petition ; perhaps the emphasis should fall on *us* and *we* only, "forgive *us* as *we* forgive." Do not fall into the practice of some who alter or interpolate the sixth petition.

Express your doxologies in scripture language only.

The concluding benediction is a solemn mode of dismissing the congregation. Some prefer the first person *us*, others the second person *you*, relying on the uniform example of Paul in the beginning and end of his Epistles,—“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with *you* all.”

In quitting the house, converse seriously with your people, avoiding all appearance of levity.

HINTS TO THE PEOPLE.

Rise, determined to go to your place of worship, without consulting the weather; without "observing the wind or regarding the clouds."

Dress more plainly than usual, without any superfluous ornament.

If you use a carriage, let it come to the door, at the usual hour, without orders.

Proceed to the house of the Lord in families, every individual attending; otherwise, irregularity will grow into neglect, wandering and disunion.

Be in your pew before the minister enters the pulpit; it is both disrespectful and disorderly to enter after the commencement of the service.

Open your pew for strangers without regarding their condition, James ii. 1, 2.

To offer a short petition on entering your pew is a becoming practice, when neither singular nor affected: but it is better to meditate in silence till the service begins, or to read a devotional Psalm in prose or metre.

There should be one bible at least for every family, and a psalm-book for every member.

Join in the psalmody according to your ability, and always follow the line, to prevent distraction of thought.

At prayer kneel or stand, according to the usage; standing is the practice most frequently mentioned in Scripture.

When your thoughts begin to wander, repeat to yourself the words of the minister. If very subject to this infirmity, repeat the whole prayer.

Listen seriously and devoutly to the reading of scripture; when read solemnly and impressively, it will excite thoughts which might not occur in private.

Make a personal application of the sermon, not to others but to yourself, if practical; if doctrinal, listen with seriousness and candour, without dwelling on the defects of the preacher.

During the collection, abstain from conversation and whispering. This indicates that you have not attended to the sermon, or that you have already dismissed it from your thoughts, or that you have been impatient for the conclusion, that you might give vent to some idle talk.

Remember the widow's mite.

Join seriously and affectionately in the intercessory petitions as an exercise of charity and brotherly love as well as devotion.

In quitting the house, abstain from light or noisy conversation, and the discussion of worldly affairs, or the news of the day.

It is a shameful practice, in country congregations, for people to be going out and retiring during the service.

NEMO.

COMMENTARY ON COLOSSIANS,

CHAP. XI. VERSE 9.

"For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

THIS text is supposed by Trinitarians to prove the absolute perfection and equality of Christ with God. We might briefly answer them on this point, by placing in contraposition to their conclusion, another text from the preceding chapter, v. 19. "*For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell.*" This teaches, that whatever fulness Christ possessed, it was *derived from*, and at the disposal of the 'Father;' correspondent with our Saviour's declaration, Matt. xi. 27. "All things are *delivered* unto me of my Father;" and John xiv. 10. "The words that I speak unto you, I speak *not of myself*, but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works."

Whether Trinitarians understand by the word "God-head" in the passage under consideration, a "Trinity of persons," or simply God himself, I utterly deny the *possibility*, that the Almighty Jehovah, in the full and unlimited extent of his perfections, *could literally dwell in the person of Christ*. And I rest my argument on grounds so infallible, that I defy them to dispute or contradict it, without at the same time erasing from their minds a belief in the *omnipresence* of the Deity. Trinitarians admit, according to the words of their own creed, that "God is a spirit infinite." In regard to this all Christians must agree. I ask, then, how is it possible, that *infinity* could be comprehended or enclosed within that which is *finite*? Or how is it conceivable, that He, whose spirit animates and pervades every particle of created existence, could tabernacle in a human frame, or be incorporated within a frail tenement of clay? The supposition is incredible. I lay it down as an incontro-

vertible proposition, founded on principles tantamount to the clearest mathematical demonstration, that an *infinite spirit* cannot be compressed or restricted within *finite bounds*. *Omnipotence* itself, could not contract, or diminish, or curtail the correspondent attribute of *universality*, or *omnipresence*, as if so, it must *annihilate itself* ! The attempt would be a destructive conflict—a mutual sacrifice of the divine attributes—an eternal war of Deity, and God must cease to exist ! But this is so utterly inconceivable, and so directly opposed to the unchangeable nature of the divine perfections, that the doctrine of “God dwelling in Christ”, in the literal sense in which these words are taken by some, by leading to this consequence, proves, in the clearest manner, its falsity and unscripturality.

In forming just conceptions of the Almighty, we cannot divest our minds of the belief of his *omnipresence*. We cannot, by the utmost effort of our understanding, *locate* him—we cannot for one moment give credence to the idea of his *definite existence* ; and I assert, without fear of contradiction, that he whose presence fills the immensity of space, and whose providence governs and upholds all worlds, could no more dwell in the absolute plenitude of his perfections in the “man Christ Jesus” than he could be supposed to be confined to one particular spot, rather than another, throughout the immeasurable extent of his creation, or to reside wholly in any temple or sacred edifice dedicated to his worship. We may fix our observation on departments of nature where his glorious attributes are more majestically displayed, and in which the Almighty manifests himself by more stupendous and commanding exhibitions of his transcendent power ; but the thought of his *omnipresence* still recurs with overwhelming conviction to our minds, and we are forced to adopt the language of the Patriarch—“Lo, these are parts of his ways, but how little a portion is heard of him ;” and to exclaim with the Psalmist, “If I ascend up into Heaven, thou art there ; If I make my bed in the depths of the earth, behold, thou art there ; if I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea ; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.”

In whatever manner, then, God did co-operate with Christ,—by whatever measure or extent he may have poured out his spirit upon him, or exercised his sovereign

agency through him as the medium, he still continued to be the same all-perfect, unchangeable Jehovah. Every rational creature participates in a portion of the power, wisdom, and benevolence of the Great Being from whom their existence is derived. Christ participated in these divine gifts in a supereminent degree. Yet, as rays from the sun impair not the brightness or magnitude of the great luminary from which they are transmitted, so the Almighty, while he gives to the orb of day all its radiance, and to the heavens all their splendor—while he diffuses life, and happiness, and intelligence, throughout the whole of his material and spiritual creation, and endows his angels and messengers of his will, with whatever powers or capacities he may think fit—remains himself undiminished in glory, the same omnipotent, omnipresent, and universal Lord.

This *locating* of the Deity—this doctrine which teaches, that God dwelt solely and exclusively in the human body of Christ—this confining and restricting him to *place*—must have had its origin in heathenish misconceptions of the Creator of the universe. The idolatrous Gentiles, failing in a belief of one supreme first cause, apportioned the creation and government of the world among an infinite number of gods and goddesses, and to each they assigned, according as their own foolish caprice or fancy might suggest, some particular territory or department of nature over which they presided, and beyond which their legislation or authority could not pass. Thus, they not only worshipped the stars as the residence of the “Gods,” but every stream, and hill, and grove, and rural retreat, were consecrated as under the peculiar protection of some celestial divinity. Nay, darkened were their views, and so debased were their minds by superstition, that they carved and hewed out for themselves, from the commonest substances of nature, images or representatives of their imaginary Deities, *of which*, when formed, they supposed them to take *immediate possession*, and to which they offered the most senseless and idolatrous worship.

I feel bound to affirm, then, that those who can cherish the belief, that the infinite and eternal Jehovah, *did* or *could* dwell in the human body of Christ, and labouring under the influence of a like degrading superstition, and entertain notions respecting the exalted character of the Deity, equally gross and derogatory.

Having thus proved, by the application of a rational enquiry alone, that the meaning which Trinitarians deduce from the text, is manifestly repugnant to the unalterable laws of the Divine nature, and at direct variance with the inviolable principles of truth ; I shall, in my subsequent observations endeavour to shew, that their interpretation of the passage is equally unfounded on Scriptural authority.

In explaining the text correctly, we must be guided entirely by the sense of the passage in which it occurs. The Apostle is exhorting the church to constancy in Christ, and to beware of being led astray by human tradition. v. 8, 9. "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world and not after Christ:" "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." This is the argument, or at least part of the argument held out, why they should adhere to him—"For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." The question is, then, what is meant by these words? Trinitarians insist, that the Apostle signified the fulness of the divine perfections, or in other words, that Christ was perfect God and perfect man at the same time. I assert, however, that this interpretation does not carry out the meaning of the Apostle. He was speaking rather of the *doctrine* than of the *divinity* of Christ, if it be possible to view them disconnectedly. He was pointing out to them, the superior excellence of the instructions which he delivered, and the real, positive, and substantial benefit of Gospel truths and Gospel ordinances, when compared with the vain philosophy of the Heathen, and the ceremonial observances of the Jewish religion. The traditions of men consisted of mere empty speculations, and were neither calculated to command their assent, nor inspire their hope. Their philosophy was dark and uncertain, sullied over with clouds and shadows. It gave them no satisfactory views of futurity ; it yielded them no grounds of consolation or happiness. But Christ was a teacher sent from God, who taught with wisdom and authority ; who was qualified to lead them to a knowledge of the most exalted truths, and to enlarge their minds with the most extended views of the Divine dispensations, being himself possessed of a full and comprehensive knowledge of the whole will and counsel of God. His

sources of instruction were inexhaustible, as they were pure, heavenly, sublime. In him dwelt "all fulness," all wisdom and knowledge, all grace and truth ; every divine qualification and endowment from God the Father, which were requisite to render him the powerful and efficient Saviour and Redeemer of mankind. He was the channel, through which the blessings of salvation freely and amply flowed, and in whom, the riches of God's grace, and mercy, and love, were like kindred streams from one parent fountain, gently allied and blended together. Thus as it is written in the prophecy of Isaiah, lxi. 1. (and which Christ declared, Luke iv. 21, was fulfilled in him) "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor ; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." This seems to throw satisfactory light on the meaning of the Apostle, when he says, that, "in Christ dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead,"—that the spirit of the Lord was upon him—that he was chosen and "anointed" of God—and that such an abundance of wisdom and knowledge and power was communicated unto him, as qualified him for the fulfilment of the great and important embassy on which he was commissioned.

That this is the "*fulness*" spoken of by the Apostle, and not an essential fulness or equality of Christ with the Father, may be proved from corresponding passages, in which God is said to dwell in all true Christians ; as in 1 Cor. iii, 16. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the *spirit of God dwelleth in you.*" Again, Christ himself says, John vi, 56, "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, *dwelleth in me and I in him.*" Now we will perceive at once, that these words, taken literally, lead to a monstrous absurdity. No one can believe, but those who are labouring under gross delusion, that while they eat bread and drink wine in the sacrament, in commemoration of the ministry and death of Christ, they are really guilty of such Cannibalism, as eating the body and drinking the blood of Christ. Such a supposition is monstrous, although entertained by too large a proportion of professing Christians. Every one of sense must perceive at once

that the language is figurative. In like manner, when Christ says, that he *dwelleth* in that man, and that man in him—we cannot certainly understand, that Christ *dwells* in us, or we in him, in the literal acceptation of the term; for it is plain, if *we dwelt in Christ*, we would be in Heaven already. The language must mean, that there is a more intimate *spiritual union and alliance* formed betwixt them, from the observance of this solemn covenant. Again, 1 Tim. i. 14. “That good thing which was committed unto thee, keep by the *Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.*” 1 John iv. 12. “If we love one another, *God dwelleth in us*, and his love is perfected in us.” Again, at the 15 v. “Whosoever shall confess that *Jesus is the Son of God,*” not, that Jesus is of a like equality with God—not, that there are a “Trinity of persons in the Godhead” but “that Jesus is the *Son of God*”—“*God dwelleth in him, and he in God.*” v. 16, “God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, *dwelleth in God and God in him.*” Again, Eph. iii. 19. “And to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that *ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.*” Is this, I ask, meant to signify, that they might be filled with all the fulness of the Divine perfections? No, our reason repels such an idea. It means, that they should be filled with a sufficiency of divine gifts and spiritual blessings;—such a “fulness” as would qualify them for the efficient performance of their Christian avocations.

Now, the texts which I have quoted, contain equally as strong and positive, and even more direct language, in regard to *God dwelling in all true Christians*, than the passage upon which we have been commenting, hath expressed, in reference to *God dwelling in Christ*:—and if Trinitarians will persist in maintaining, in opposition to reason and the harmony of Scripture, that the language of the Apostle in this instance, proves Christ to be God; they may, by the same reasoning, and by similar inference, raise us all to the rank of Gods,—nay, to a perfect equality with Jehovah himself! So that, according to their doctrine, we shall not only have “three infinite and eternal Gods” reigning in Heaven, but thousands walking the earth at this very moment, in the form and aspect of men! Such are the impious conclusions to which Trinitarianism would lead us? How guarded should we be against the attempts of those,

who either by fair or compulsory means, would endeavour to force a doctrine upon our reception, so calculated to corrupt the purity of our Christian principles, and to offer an insult to our maker, by leading us to entertain opinions unworthy of his high and adorable character. J. C.

[Note.—Rosenmuller's observation on this passage is to the following purport—"The fulness of the Godhead" means all the treasures of divine wisdom"—the words "of the Godhead" are not to be understood of the nature of God, as of something dwelling in him—but of what proceeds and derives its origin from God. As in the 19th verse "the increase of God" does not mean any increase on God's part but on ours, proceeding from God. "Bodily" means "really," opposed to "shadow," which is often used for what is apparent and not real. It appears from the whole passage taken together, that "the fulness of the Godhead" means what Christ bestows upon us. The Jewish institutions which Paul was arguing against were *images* of the future blessings of Christianity; but in Christ and what he taught was the *body* or the substance which Christians were to enjoy.

EDITOR.]

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE BIBLE CHRISTIAN.]

SIR,—Your Correspondent C. in your last Number, is, I think, unnecessarily perplexed about two passages of Scripture that seem to him inconsistent with each other. The passages are the following—John vi. 44, "No man cometh unto me except the Father who hath sent me draw him." And John xiv. 6, "No man cometh unto the Father but by me."

The first passage seems to mean simply that no man could come to the knowledge of the Gospel of Christ, did not God afford him means, opportunities, and inducements. The purport of the second passage is, that no man can come to the enjoyment of eternal life but by Jesus Christ. To come to the Father, or to the Father's house, is synonymous with eternal life. This appears evidently from the connection; for these words immediately follow: "I am the *way*, the truth and the life," which some would interpret to mean, "I am the true way to eternal life." I can see no inconsistency whatever in these two passages, but on the contrary the latter

seems to be a natural sequel to the former. To Divine Providence we are indebted for the means of coming to Christ; or God draws us that we may come to him; and by coming to him—by being his followers, we shall come to God—we shall see God—we shall be happy in his presence to all eternity.

I do not deny that there are apparent inconsistencies in Scripture—some of them not easily reconciled: but this is not of the number. There is one obvious advantage arising from them which is, that they prove very satisfactorily that the writers were independent of each other: that they did not servilely copy or show an anxiety to avoid collision and explain differences which we should certainly have seen, if they had been framing a fictitious narrative. With respect to the question of the eternity of future punishment, it is involved in some doubt and difficulty. Your correspondent will find it most fully treated by Dr. Southwood Smith in his work on the Divine Government, in which, if I recollect right, he enters very minutely into the consideration of the passages of Scripture that bear upon the question.

Aug. 25th, 1833.

I remain, &c.

V. D. M.

TO THE REV. S. DILL.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,—Allow me to commence this letter, by adding another, to the many complaints contained in my last; and one to which I most respectfully, but seriously, beg your attention. You belong to a church, which, not satisfied with the Holy Scriptures as “the *only* rule given of God, by which men should glorify and enjoy him,” has superadded other standards composed by fallible men. These you have “from courts solemnly constituted in the name of the Lord Jesus, professed before God, and proclaimed to the world as the rule and faith of your church. *Is this the truth?* Are not you a living witness that it is an awful, and solemn falsehood? Have you not deliberately rejected one great and leading doctrine of these standards? And are you a solitary instance of such conduct? Do you not know that there are very many of your brethren who have acted similarly, not only with regard to this, but many other dogmas put forward in these standards? Now pause, and reflect sincerely upon this conduct; and tell me if it

is consistent with the character of honest Christian men. Suppose an individual to proclaim before God and the world, certain doctrines as the articles of his faith, and yet many of them he did not believe, would not this be the most infamous hypocrisy, the most aggravated criminality? Tell me, then, as an Orthodox casuist and divine, is the sin lessened because it is shared by numbers, or sanctioned by the authority of a church? In fact, is not such conduct a near approach to the guilt which the word of God characterises, as not having "lied unto men but unto God." To me it is plain, whatever may be the amount of this criminality, you are a sharer in it; and my prayer to God is, that he may not lay this sin of you and your brethren to your charge. Bear in mind that it has never been denied by any, except Orthodox Protestants, that *any man*, and of course any ten, or ten thousand men, have a grand and undoubted right to publish to the world what is their faith; but what has been denied is:—1st. That the ten, or the ten thousand have a right to publish to the world, as the articles of their faith, what palpably and materially they do not believe. Now this is the criminality of your church; and in this criminality you, as a member, must necessarily bear your part. And 2ndly, what has been denied is the unscriptural position, that the ten thousand have a right to enforce their dogmas, and interpretations of scripture upon the consciences of the ten. Now this again is the criminality of your church, and in that guilt you are a participator.

Besides, I would have you again consider, whether your own conduct with regard to the standards of your church, does not completely overturn the dogma of human interference in matters of faith. You have claimed for yourself *the right* to throw aside the absurd, as it appears to you, and unscriptural doctrine of eternal generation. On what ground, then, do you deny your fellow-ministers the exercise of the *same right*, in what appears to them equally unscriptural and absurd? Is it that you have one rule for yourself, and another for your brethren; "one measure with which to buy and another to sell?" Do you not see if you have this right, then any other member may reject another tenet, and thus proceed until the whole is rejected? Or do you mean to put *yourself* forward as infallible, your judgment as final, and one from which no appeal can lie, and your inves-

tigation as the "*ne plus ultra*" of inquiry? Yet this has been precisely your own conduct. You reject eternal generation, not because it is not clearly taught in your standards, but because it is not found in the "law and the testimony." The Remonstrant Ministers, once your brethren of the same church, generally, rejected the doctrine of the Trinity, not because it was not the doctrines of the standards of your church, but because it was not the *doctrine of the Bible*; and at the very moment in which you did not believe one most awful and momentous doctrine of your avowed creeds, you laboured for their expulsion, because they rejected another still more unscriptural and absurd. Whilst I thus remind you of your weakness and inconsistency, God forbid I should rank you with some worthless, but leading members of your church, who have again and again most solemnly pledged themselves before hundreds of their fellow-men, and in the presence of their God, that they would never rest satisfied so long as one Arian remained in the body, and who year after year proclaim *they know many still to remain*; nay, wilfully and advisedly, hold communion with such in the same Presbytery, without daring to attempt their expulsion. To me no course of conduct ever appeared more criminal, or unprincipled.

I shall now proceed to review your opinions with regard to Sonship of Jesus Christ, not because there is any difference between you and me respecting the absurdity of eternal generation; but because, having introduced a different account of the origin of the title "Son of God," you appear to conceive you have freed the doctrine of the Trinity from the unanswerable objections which lie against it, in consequence of its connexion with this doctrine. In this I conceive you have not succeeded, and I trust I shall convince you, that however obscure the doctrine of eternal generation, it is not more contrary to the general usages of language, and the whole tenor of Divine Revelation than your own; that such attempts to support the dogma of a Trinity are utterly hopeless, and that the true way to free Christianity from the absurdities which have so long disgraced it, is at once to give up the tenet to which alone they owe their origin. After having presented us with the views of Arian and Athanasian writers on the sonship of Christ, you proceed to state your own, which are contained in the two following passages of Scripture. John i. 14. "The *word* was made flesh

and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father.”—Luke i. 35. “And the angel said unto Mary, the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.”

Now Sir, I rejoice, that when you, an advocate of creeds, and who so zealously seek to bind your incomprehensible dogmas on the consciences of others, come to oppose these, you are obliged to renounce your own principles, and to appeal from the decrees of Synods to “the law and to the testimony.”

There is considerable difficulty in being able to state distinctly, what are your views of the origin of the sonship of Jesus Christ, after all you have written. It is evident you do not believe, with your Athanasian brethren, in the doctrine of eternal generation; nor with Dr. S. Clarke, that he became the Son by generation before all worlds; nor with Dr. A. Clarke, that he is the Son of God in his human nature only. “He is not,” you say, “the Son of God by creation, as were Adam and the Angels; nor by covenant, as were the Jews; nor by official prefiguration, as were Jewish Judges; nor by regeneration, or adoption, as have been all the family of his grace: but by way of emphasis and eminence, he is absolutely the Son of God by most mysterious and *all-important generation*.” Christ, then, is the *Son of God by generation*; and after all you have said to the contrary, we have still a “generated God;” who, according to you, was generated (produced) not two thousand years ago. This generation, you know, is not of “his human nature exclusively,” which is the doctrine of Dr. A. Clarke; nor of “his divine nature,” which is the doctrine of the great bulk of Athanasian writers; but of the “personal union of both.” Now, the second person of your Trinity is “God and man in two distinct natures and one person forever;” and by a “most mysterious and all-important generation, only became such, according to you, in the fulness of time.” But the second person of the Trinity, you tell us, is the very supreme, self-existent God, and thus we have a generated God. Do not hope to escape from this inconsistency, by telling us it was only his sonship that was generated, but that the being itself was not generated. This would only be another Athanasian absurdity. Did you ever hear of

a being becoming a father by begetting a sonship? or where in scripture do you read of an only begotten sonship? It is, perhaps, too much to expect of Athanasian writers to be consistent, but certainly the doctrine of a generated God, is not much in accordance with what you say, p. 15, "A begotten God! and a generated God! to what early enemies of Christ and Christianity, do we owe this affront?" &c. I am not sure that I understand you and other Athanasian writers, when you speak of the "abstract deity of Christ," becoming man, by "taking to itself a true body, and a reasonable soul." Is not this rather a novel species of generation? And tell me, if Christ, the second person of the Trinity, by a "mysterious and all-important generation, became the Son of God in the fullness of time," how does his taking a body make him son to the first person, or the first a father to him? Is not this a new and an unheard of way to establish the relation of paternity and filiation? Is it not, in all cases, the act of the parent which constitutes the relation? But after all, where do you and the Westminster Divines find this almost pagan metamorphosis? Certainly not in your Bibles. Their language is, "a body hast *thou* prepared me," not a body I take to myself. "The word was made (*γενετο*, created) flesh" and therefore did not take it.

Let me call your attention to the following passage, p. 20, "When God reveals himself to man, it is necessarily in man's own language. If the above terms (father and son,) therefore, make any part of divine revelation, they must be understood by analogy, in the conventional and familiar usage of human language, or otherwise be utterly unintelligible. That we may be able correctly to trace the analogy, we must in the first place learn what is necessarily and essentially implied in sonship among men. In the first place, it will be admitted to imply priority of existence on the part of the father; and secondly, to imply posteriority, on the part of the son. A son, as old as his father, involves such a complication of absurdities as requires no ingenuity to detect or expose. Sonship among men implies in the third place an *importation of personal existence* on the part of the Father," &c. Now, do you not see, that these plain and obvious principles, completely overturn the doctrine of the Trinity. I ask not when, or how, Christ became the son of God; I only ask is he his son? Now, he is

repeatedly so styled in the Holy Scriptures. Then, if God speaks to us "intelligibly," and according to the conventional and familiar usage of human language, there is a posteriority and derivation of being, on the part of Christ. I ask, is God ever stiled his Father? Repeatedly, in the Holy Scriptures. Then I inquire not when, or how, he became a father, but unless he designs to speak unintelligibly, and to deceive, he is both prior in existence and the impartor of being. "A son as old as his father involves such a complication of absurdities as requires no ingenuity to detect or expose." It is mere assertion and absurdity to say he is not the Father of the abstract Deity of Christ. There is a *being* who is the Son of God, for he is so proclaimed by God himself. That being, whoever he is, is posterior and therefore subordinate to the Father, and has derived his existence from him. The subterfuge of the human nature will not here avail you, for you tell us, "the son of God, as applied to Christ Jesus, is a complex title, comprehending his divine and human nature in personal union." p. 95. As the term son expresses this personal union of the two natures, and implies posteriority and derivation of being in both, he is posterior and derived. Now, sir, this is all for which I have ever contended: that there is a being who is the son of God, that being our Saviour, of whom God is both the *father* and the *God*; and to whom the son is therefore posterior and subordinate, and I rejoice to find that you are of the same opinion.

You express yourself with that just and virtuous indignation, which must be felt by every mind, which retains a proper reverence for the Bible when you reflect upon the almost pagan phraseology, which Athanasian writers have employed in delineating their system. "Eternal generation! I could as easily conceive of an eternal creation. To what a confounding system would such a faith reduce us! If it be conceivable that God may have an eternal son, why not other eternal sons?" Again, p. 15, "Eternal generation! A begotten God! were not our ears familiarised from early youth to these obnoxious phrases, and had we not been trained" (oh, the curse of human creeds) "to connect them in our minds with the most appreciated doctrines of Christianity, they would necessarily fall upon our ear with the most grating and painful discordance." Now this is truly just and excellent. But had the Bible retained its place:

in the church of Christ, as the only standard of faith, Christianity had never been thus disgraced. Yet, pause for a moment and reflect, if there are not some as great absurdities, in doctrines which you still retain, and profess to regard as "the most appreciated doctrines of Christianity." An incarnate God? To what enemies of Christ, and his holy faith, do we owe this phrase, better suited to the Pagan doctrines of Greece or Rome? A God in flesh! clothed with flesh or with a garment! Would all the flesh in the universe form a covering for him who fills all space! An incarnate God! He who is unlimited, circumscribed within the ordinary limits of the human stature. He who if he were, or could be hungry, would not apply to thee for food, yet hungry and fasting. He who fainteth not, neither is weary, becoming weary, fatigued and fainting. He whom no man hath seen, or indeed can see, seen, touched, and handled. He who is Almighty, helpless as a babe, weak and fainting, an angel from heaven, one of his own creatures, who has all its strength only in him, yet sent to strengthen him who is Almighty. He who alone hath immortality, yielding up the Ghost dying? Yes, a dying and a dead God! Can Paganism surpass this? Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askalon! God is truly seen and manifested in all his works. His only son was the brightest of these glorious manifestations; but he was only a manifestation of God, not the very, eternal, all perfect God himself, on whom no man can look and live.

Again, have you ever thought of a born God? Is not this, if possible, a greater absurdity than that which excites your virtuous indignation, a generated or *begotten* God. Yet this is your own doctrine. The holy thing, which is born of Mary, is the abstract deity of Christ, united to the human nature; or if it is not, we may ask when did it become united? If the word was not made flesh in the womb of Mary, be good enough to tell us when it became incarnate? For although you tell us, "that no controversialist of physiological acumen would suppose the miraculous conception was the ground of the Divine sonship in any sense unless in reference to the Virgin mother," &c. p. 59, yet this proves that it is the ground of the Divine sonship in reference to her. She is therefore the mother of the divine son, for the mother of a sonship is an absurdity, and of what

she is thus the mother is plain from what you say p. 95, "that the son of God is the Divine person whose sonship we are discerning, is a complex title, comprehending the divine and human nature," &c. Thus, you see, according to you, the divine nature, the abstract deity of Christ was born of Mary as well as the human, and you can have no objection to say, with the Roman Catholic, *hail Mary, mother of God.*

Will you attempt to shelter yourself here under the plea of mystery? Remember this plea has, with equal justice, been pleaded in defence of eternal generation, and indeed of every absurdity, which has so long deformed the fair face of Christianity. The truth is, the greater the absurdity, the greater the mystery. But remember, we do not ask you *how God can be born?* We only inquire into the fact of a *born God!* And a fact it is if your system be true. A fact it is, that the great eternal God who "fills the universe, and whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain," was the babe of a span long, that he who was self-existent, was dependent upon his own creatures for existence, nay, was by them deprived of life at last; that he was bounded and circumscribed within the womb of Mary, and that she is mother of the very eternal, self-existent God. Blessed God, with the light of thy holy word for our guide, into what darkness and absurdity do men run!

In my next I shall notice, more particularly, the two passages of Scripture on which you rest your extraordinary doctrine of generation, and the origin of the sonship of Jesus Christ. In the mean time, I remain, with great respect, yours truly,

Ballycarry, August 24th, 1833.

WM. GLENDY.

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

"Scripture Proofs and Illustrations of Unitarianism."

BY JOHN WILSON.

MR. WILSON is fully entitled to the best thanks of the Unitarian community, and we freely give him our own, for his valuable publication. The plan of his work we highly approve, and his execution of it is entitled to much praise.

The *First Part* contains the scriptural evidence for Unitarianism, in which the author has not only made a judicious selection of texts from the Old and New Testaments, in vindication of the unity of God, of his peculiar titles, and of his being the only proper object of religious worship; but he has also given, of many of these passages, the translation of the most eminent ancient and modern Biblical critics. In the second chapter of this part, he proceeds to prove, in a similar way, that Christ does not possess the essential attributes of Deity, and is inferior to God.

The *Second Part* contains an examination of the alleged Scriptural evidence for the doctrine of the Trinity, and the Deity of Christ. The writer has made this part of his work not merely interesting and instructive to the student of theology, but very convenient to the common reader and deep-read divine, by dividing the left hand page into two columns, in the former of which he has placed the alleged proof for the Trinity, and opposite to which, in the latter, he has placed illustrative texts; giving, in both cases, the translations and paraphrases of the most distinguished divines. The right hand page contains the author's own observations on the alleged proofs and illustrative texts, which are always clear and pertinent. In the second chapter he enters into an examination of the scriptural evidence alleged for the opinion, that names and titles indicating the nature of God, are applied to Jesus Christ. The illustrative texts which he has selected, are calculated to convince Trinitarians, that the interpretations which they put upon certain phrases, when applied to Christ, will either prove *too little* or *too much* for their own tenets, inasmuch as peculiar titles and epithets are applied to the Father, which are never applied to Christ, and that the very language, by which Trinitarians labour to prove the omnipresence, omnipotence, and omniscience of Christ, is applied to angels and inspired men.

The *Title* of Mr. Wilson's publication, is not higher than what the matter justifies;—the *Dedication* is to two Unitarian divines well known to many of our readers; the *Contents* enable the reader to find with ease information on any particular subject which is discussed;—the *Chapters and Sections* will accommodate the inquirer who can spare but a short time for perusal at once;—the *Extracts*, which must have cost the author great labour

and much expense, are valuable both to Unitarians and Trinitarians;—the *Observations*, as we have already said, are clear and pertinent, and the *Index* enables all who are inclined, to see, at a glance, the translation and interpretation of the most difficult texts, as given by the most celebrated divines of different churches. Without admitting the accuracy of all Mr. Wilson's views of Christian doctrine, we are convinced that his book will become a standard work with Unitarians, and that the present impression will soon be out of print. We wish it wide circulation, and we again beg leave to present the author with our unfeigned thanks for his valuable production.

“*The Moral Class Book.*”

This volume is the production of COUNSELLOR SULLIVAN, of Boston, America, and it has, as it well merits, been reprinted in London. The author intends it for the use of Schools; and all parents and preceptors, who are anxious for the morality of the children committed to their care, should procure copies of it. The work is divided into *thirty-four chapters*, and Mr. Sullivan has made several subjects, which are considered abstruse, both easy and agreeable to the youthful mind. Air, animals, amusements,—brutes, bones, books,—conscience, cards, christianity,—duties, drinking, dancing,—earth, evil, error,—firmament, food, free agency,—globe, geology, ghosts,—labour, lying, lungs,—minerals, miracles, muscles,—planets, pride, profanity,—slander, swearing, and sabbath, are among the *two hundred and thirty-nine* topics on which he has written with much credit to himself, and advantage to society.

“*The Life of the Saviour.*”

This little Book is the work of a very distinguished divine, the REV. HENRY WARE, jun. professor of pulpit eloquence and the pastoral care in Harvard University, United States, America. Mr. Ware is personally known to some of our friends in Great Britain and Ireland, and already well known to many of our readers as an author. His name is sufficient to recommend any volume to which

it is prefixed, and the subject of the volume now before us, is by far the most important that can be introduced to the attention of the Christian. His remarks are original, striking, and instructive.

“ The Centenary of the Birth of Dr. Priestley.”

We have read with pleasure, within these few days, a *Sermon*, by the REV. JOHN KENTISH, which he delivered to his enlightened congregation, in the New Meeting-house, Birmingham, on the 24th of March, 1833, being the centenary of the birth of Dr. Priestley. The learned and amiable author of this discourse, is one of the successors of the celebrated man, whose education, ministry, labours, publications, exile, and death, he has so instructively delineated. The stain which the town of Birmingham brought upon itself, in the year 1791, by the persecution of the eminent and pious Dr. Priestley, can never be blotted out, while the pages of history remain ; but still it must relieve the feelings of its present inhabitants to witness the progress of science, of civil and religious liberty, and to be conscious, that though many of their predecessors were once the last, they themselves are now among the first, in the protection of the sacred rights of conscience, and the cause of free inquiry. Were Trinitarians generally acquainted with the eminent services which Dr. Priestley rendered in vindication of Divine Revelation, and the many sacrifices which he made in the pursuit of sacred and philosophical truth, they must wonder, why so good and so great a man was so cruelly treated. But the partial evil which he suffered, has turned out, as he foresaw, to be universal good. Mr. Kentish has done honour to himself, and justice to the memory of the divine and philosopher, of whom he has so unaffectedly and touchingly written.

“ The Emancipation of the Christian Church from the trammels of Human Creeds.”

The publication which is thus entitled, is a *Sermon* by the REV. JOHN OMER SQUIER, of Deptford, and should be read by all Protestants and Presbyterians who advocate human authority in the Church of Christ. Mr.

Squier's discourse is well calculated to convince them, that they will find it no easy task to condemn human creeds in the Church of Rome, while they support them in their own. For spiritual tyranny, whether exercised by a Pope or Presbytery, a Convocation or a Synod, is the same thing under different names. If the Pope excommunicate a priest, because he refuses to bow to his changeable interpretations of the Bible; and the General Synod of Ulster "will not continue in fellowship," a minister who is "found not to preach the doctrines" contained in its overtures, we should like to know the difference between the *human authority* assumed by the one, (the Pope,) and by the other, (the Synod;) or the right of private judgment which the *latter* enjoys more than the *former*.

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DAVID AND JONATHAN.*

FRIENDSHIP is an intimate and tender connection between persons of amiable and virtuous dispositions, and similar temper and habits.

Its intimacy distinguishes it from those hasty and fugitive attachments which we often feel for persons little known, and sometimes little worthy of our esteem. By its tenderness it is discriminated from that cool, dispassionate esteem or respect which good men mutually entertain. Without amiable dispositions it could never be formed, nor could it long continue without the influence of virtuous principles. It is also obvious, that a similarity of temper and habits are essential to the union of friends. These requisites, however, are not to be taken in their strictest sense. It is only meant that the prevailing feature in the character of friends, must be a love for virtue, and a respect for religion; for there is no firmer bond of every sentimental attachment than a love for pure religion, genuine piety, undisturbed by doctrinal differences, and polemical contentions.

It is evident that the vicious and profane can have no share in our definition of friendship. An union between one of these and a virtuous or religious man, is either impracticable in its commencement, or will at least be extremely precarious in its continuance. If they be previously known to each other, it can never take place; and it must have an end as soon as the parties become thoroughly acquainted, that is, when true friendship ought to begin. Neither can this amiable connection take place between men, both of whom are positively wicked; because each of them must be conscious, that he is incapable of discharging the duties of friendship; and suspicious, that the other is equally unworthy of confidence. The union of such men can be cemented

* For Saul, see page 339.

only by a mutuality of interest, and will be dissolved as soon as the advantage arising from it ceases to be reciprocally equal. Now the beauty of friendship consists in the reverse of this, in the sacrifice of personal interest, whenever it comes in competition with the interest of a friend; combinations of such men are conspiracies against their neighbours, and are preserved by selfishness instead of generosity.

Neither can friendship subsist between men that have only a negative claim to the reputation of virtue. There are persons of such an insipid and undecided character, that one is at a loss whether to call them good or bad. They are as free from vice as their neighbours; but they are equally destitute of virtue. They are innocent, but they are also unprincipled. These triflers—these men who are good by accident, or vicious by constitution, are also incapable of friendship: for this intimate and tender relation must be formed by principle, and maintained by the exercise of decided and manly virtue; and it also requires a degree of firmness, resolution and consistency, that can be expected only from the man who is guided by principle, and inspired by generous affections. Similarity of temper and habits also must be understood with some degree of latitude. On the one hand we may have known men, qualified in every other respect for this delightful union, yet kept asunder by the repelling power of contrary turns of sentiment. Again we sometimes meet with real friends, who have an apparent incongruity, and even contrariety, in their tempers and sentiments, nay, whose friendship seems to be strengthened and cemented by a certain discrepancy of sentiment and manner. We may conclude, then, that as in good music, so in friendship, a certain kind and degree of harmony is essential to its existence, and a certain kind and degree of discord not inconsistent with it.

From this combination of estimable qualities, it is plain that there is a peculiar beauty in this relation, and a very refined and elegant pleasure to be derived from it. It gratifies the purest affections of our souls. It lets us taste and see how good a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity; how very pleasant it is to do good; how delightful sometimes to break loose from the servitude of self, and to love our neighbour even as ourselves. The flame of friendship must be tended by a gentle hand, and fed with a constant and regular sup-

ply of fuel. It will languish under neglect and inattention, and be extinguished by a rude disregard of its wants or its weaknesses. We have seldom an opportunity of signalizing our friendship by splendid displays of generosity and zeal; but every day presents us with an occasion of gratifying the feelings, and preferring the society of a friend. This unity of spirit, this bond of love, is also attended by mutual confidence and unreserved communication; and blessed with the participation of hope and pleasure, and even by the mournfully tender anxieties of sympathy and sorrow. These sympathies heighten our joys, and alleviate the bitterness of our grief; they double our pleasure, and convert the tumultuous bursts of lamentation, into a sober and tranquil, and not unpleasing melancholy. They crown the cup of the prosperous, and pour balm into the wounds of the afflicted.

Beside the moral beauty of friendship and its sentimental pleasures, it is productive of many important benefits. Two persons thus incorporated will act as if they were but one; and we may say, that the same person gains by this connection a power of acting in two places at the same time: for where is the difference between prosecuting your interest in person, and entrusting it to the zeal and activity of a friend? By this union your influence also is doubled; and in every respect you are a gainer. But though in general the parties may be considered as one, their union may occasionally cease whenever their mutual interest can be promoted by the separation: thus, should one of the parties be reduced to poverty, the other is not so far involved in his misfortunes as to be disqualified from affording him assistance, unless he has imprudently and unkindly involved his friend in his distress, and thus forfeited his affection, and cut off his own resources. Should one be oppressed with some very afflicting calamity in his person or family, the other retains sufficient composure to administer comfort and take his place in active life. Should one be misled by any undue bias, or inordinate prejudice or passion, the other is not necessarily affected by the same, and may convince him of his error and recall him to the path of virtue.

As to the number of individuals that may be included in this bond, I believe it must be confined to two. Those friends whose attachments are recorded in history,

sacred, civil, or fabulous, are, I believe, always found in pairs. We often meet with more numerous associations of men devoted to each other and a common cause, military, patriotic, or religious, as their only bond of union; but such an attachment can hardly come under the description given of friendship.

The peculiar difficulty in forming such a connection, consists in this, that if we suppose four persons to be so united, we must suppose that each of them has three friends, a happiness seldom to be hoped for even by one individual, much less to be expected by every one in a society, and that they shall agree so exactly, that they shall all be cemented by this intimate and tender tie, this rational and sentimental attachment with the same persons.

The character of women seems to be peculiarly fitted for the formation of friendships. Their affections are stronger, and their sensibility more lively, but these qualities are often counteracted by peculiar circumstances, and it may be doubted whether men are not, on the whole, susceptible of more ardent and constant friendship. In the earliest years of both sexes, females seem to be more prone to form this sentimental union. The rude and active sports of boys, and the variety of their pursuits, often divert them from forming such connections. But after girls have entered their teens, they are subject to so many competitions and jealousies, as greatly to interrupt this natural tendency.* While, on the contrary,

*Shakespeare has described an instance of female friendship with singular delicacy, but unhappily it was dissolved by jealousy and suspicion.—*Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act III, Scene II.

Hel. Injurious Hermia! most ungrateful maid!

Have you conspired, have you with these contrived
To beset me with this foul derision?

Is all the counsel that we two have shar'd,
The sister's vows, the hours that we have spent,
When we have chid the hasty-footed time
For parting us,—O, and is all forgot?

All school days' friendship, childhood innocence?

I. We, Hermia, like two artificial gods,

Have with our needles created both one flower,
Both on one sampler, sitting on one cushion,
Both warbling of one song, both on one key;
As if our hands, our sides, voices, and minds,
Had been incorporate. So we grew together,
Like to a double cherry, seeming parted;

But yet a union in partition,

Two lovely berries moulded on one stem.

So, with two seeming bodies, but one heart;—

the same period of life is the peculiar season of warm and romantic friendship among young men. When a young woman marries, all such ties are immediately dissolved; she is engrossed by other affections and other cares, and her former companions no longer consider her as an object of confidence. About this period, men too begin to addict themselves to other occupations that divert them from forming friendly connections. But these are so various and independent as not greatly to interfere with former attachments; and in this respect matrimony has with them little or no influence. In the more advanced years of either sex, we shall in vain look for the requisites of our definition in any eminent degree.

In love all the ingredients of true friendship exist in the highest perfection, but mingled with others which entitle it to rank in a separate class of affections. It may be styled transcendental friendship. Platonic love, if it be ever found, seems to belong to a period of life not very congenial to friendship or love, in its ordinary acceptance.

Of all those devoted friends whose names have been celebrated in history, none approach more nearly to our description of friendship than Jonathan and David. The intimate and tender connection of those gallant youths was instinctively and suddenly formed, by a strong similarity of disposition. No sooner had David signalled his valour by the death of Goliath, than Jonathan attached himself to him as his bosom friend. When David was presented to Saul immediately after this exploit, "the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul." At that time of life, a romantic heroism seems to have been the prevailing passion of both. They appear to have made a sport of danger. In a former war when Saul and the Philistines were encamped against each other, Jonathan having proceeded from his father's army to a height which overlooked an out-post of the Philistines, stationed on a steep and rugged rock; he

And will you rent our ancient love asunder,
To join with men in scorning your poor friend!
It is not friendly, it is not maidenly:
Our sex, as well as I, may chide you for it:
Though I alone do feel the injury.

Herm. I am amazed at your passionate words:
I scorn you not; it seems that you scorn me.]

immediately determined, attended only by his armour-bearer, to attack the garrison : having scaled the rock, he assailed them with such vigour that they fled before him. Their flight excited a panic in the Philistine host, and the scouts of Saul having reported that they heard a tumult in the enemy's camp, he immediately commenced a pursuit, and overthrew them with great slaughter. It was on this occasion that Saul would have put Jonathan to death for disobedience of orders, had he not been rescued by the people.

A corresponding act of desperate daring was performed by David, while Saul was pursuing him through the mountains. When David approached to reconnoitre, he found Saul sleeping by night, surrounded by his guards. Abeshai, his attendant, perceiving that they had the king in their power, proposed to put him to death ; but David rejected the proposal with indignation, and contented himself with carrying off his spear, and a cruise of water that lay at his pillow. David then went over to the other side, and stood on the top of an hill afar off, taunted Abner with the neglect of his charge, exhibited the spear as a proof of his negligence, and desired him to send one of his young men to fetch it.

A similar instance of courage occurred in the wilderness of Engedi. " It was told to Saul, Behold David is in the wilderness of Engedi. Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and went to seek David and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats. And he came to the sheep-cotes by the way, where was a cave ; and Saul went in to cover his feet ; and David and his men remained in the inner recesses of the cave. Then David arose, and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe privily, and it came to pass afterward, that David's heart smote him, because he had cut off Saul's skirt, and David stayed his men that they should not kill Saul. Saul rose up out of the cave and went on his way. David also rose afterward and went out of the cave, and cried after Saul, saying, My lord the king. And when Saul looked behind him, David stooped with his face to the earth and bowed himself." And then he displayed the skirt as a proof that he had spared his life. I omit the particulars of these interesting stories as not essential to my purpose.

The friendship of Jonathan was of the most disinterested kind, and distinguished by an extraordinary degree of constancy and zeal. He was the heir apparent

of the crown, and David had been announced by Samuel to be the successor of Saul. The attachment of Jonathan to David appeared to his father most absurd and unnatural; but notwithstanding the hatred of Saul to David, Jonathan persevered in interceding and expostulating with him till he was so enraged as to attempt to transfix him with a javelin. Finding that he could not prevail, and that David's life was in imminent danger if he remained near the court, he appointed David to meet him in a retired place, where it was resolved that David should withdraw into the wilderness and the mountains. At this endearing interview, the last that they ever enjoyed, Jonathan proposed and David agreed to enter into a covenant of mutual amity between their families. The conduct of Jonathan can be accounted for, I think, only by his reverence for the authority of Samuel and devout acquiescence in the will of heaven.

At the fatal battle of Gilboa, Saul and Jonathan were slain, but David's attachment to them survived. When an Amalekite, hoping to make his court to David, brought news of the death of Saul, and pretended that he himself had inflicted the fatal wound, David full of indignation, that one of the accursed race of Amalek should slay the Lord's anointed, ordered him immediately to be put to death. The elegy which he composed upon this occasion is perhaps the most beautiful to be found in any language. Some of the images and forms of speech may appear extravagant to modern ears, but they are all agreeable to nature, and to the oriental character.

The first verse has been thus more literally translated:—"O antelope of Israel, pierced on thine own mountains." The antelope is, over all the east, regarded as the emblem of gentleness, agility and beauty. It is common to all the deer kind, when closely pursued, to turn at last to their usual haunt, there to meet the fatal stroke. Whose heart is not deeply touched by this allusion? "O antelope of Israel, pierced on thine own mountains, how are the mighty fallen! Tell it not in Gath! publish it not in the streets of Askelon, lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph; ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew, neither let there be rain upon you, nor fields of offerings; for there the shield of the mighty is vily cast away, the shield of Saul, as though he had not

been anointed with oil. From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan turned not back, and the sword of Saul returned not empty. Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided; they were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions. Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul; who clothed you in scarlet with other delights; who put on ornaments of gold upon your apparel. How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle? O Jonathan, thou wast slain in thy high places. I am distressed for thee my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me; thy love unto me was wonderful, passing the love of women. How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!"

"The whole of this composition, (says Dr. Gedes,) is admirable, whether we consider it as a singularly fine piece of lyric poetry, or as a powerful engine to move to reconciliation even the most bitter adversaries of the royal author. On the whole, we may venture to say, that antiquity affords not a more precious relic of genuine elegiac poetry than this ode."

The following observations are from Bishop Lowth:—"The poet treats, though in no common manner, two common topics, and those the best adapted to the genuine elegy; he expresses his own sorrow, and he celebrates the praises of the deceased."

After the death of Saul, Ishboeth, his only surviving son, was induced by Abner to claim the kingdom of Israel, leaving only the kingdom of Judah to David, and maintained it for seven years, when being deserted by Abner, he was assassinated by two of his own officers. His head being presented to David, he reproached the traitors with their villainy, and ordered them to execution. He also ordered the head to be buried, and attended the obsequies in person, as he had Abner's. Both of these acts were well calculated to conciliate the adherents of Ishboeth.

David was not unmindful of the covenant made between him and Jonathan at their last parting. David said, "Is there not yet any of the house of Saul that I may show the kindness of God unto him? And Ziba said unto the king, Jonathan hath yet a son, which is lame on his feet. Then king David sent, and fetched him, and when he arrived, he fell on his face, and did

reverence, and David said unto him, fear not ; for I will show thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father, and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually, as one of the king's sons. "When he afterwards apologized to the king for not following him in his exile on account of his lameness, the king accepted his apology, and continued his favour."

In all the tokens of friendship that have been recorded, Jonathan was the sole actor, but we may safely conclude, that David, the object of such a generous attachment, did also excel in the amiable and noble qualities of a true friend ; and after the fall of Jonathan, he performed all those posthumous duties which are deemed indispensable and sacred by a delicate mind ; treating the memory of Saul with that respect which he knew would have been grateful to his son ; fulfilling the will of the deceased with punctuality, and continuing his favour and protection to his offspring.

ERASMUS.

EXTRAORDINARY INTERPRETATION.

STRANGE, though many Unitarians have read themselves into dimness of sight, that such a dulness of apprehension still clouds their minds, as to prevent them from discerning the spiritual meaning of Scripture. They may, indeed, form some faint ideas of the meaning of plain passages,—so plain that he who runs may read,—but those "in which there are some things hard to be understood," they cannot be taught to interpret in conformity with the points of Calvinism. Men, who are members of the true church, which, though not infallible, is unerring, may be entrusted with the right of private judgment ; because, however far they may wander from the truth in some of their interpretations, and lose themselves in wild conjectures and palpable contradictions, they are sure *finally* to return to the doctrines of their creed and the opinions of their party. Navigators tell us that there is a variation in the mariner's compass, and why should it be thought strange that the reputedly orthodox should deviate occasionally from plain Scripture and common sense, when they will, sooner or later, *persevere* to the right end. Aware that their opinions are not stated in the Bible, and not daring

to wrest plain scripture from its evident meaning, they must promulgate their tenets one way or another. To afford an apology for the sneer of the scoffer, or give an advantage to the quibble of the sceptic ; to make an observation which must confirm the opposition of the Jew, or shock the reason of the Gentile, is a matter of no moment, provided they can secure the approbation of the multitude, or excite the hatred of the elect against "the way which they call heresy." This practice has prevailed both abroad and at home ; and it is likely to continue until men see the propriety of expounding difficult passages of sacred writ, so that the interpretation shall harmonize with those texts which a "wayfaring man, though a fool, cannot err" in understanding.

That the readers of your valuable magazine may have a clearer comprehension of what is meant by these remarks, I shall furnish them with two examples, the one *English* and the other *Irish*, of the mode which is pursued by Calvinistic divines, in opening up passages of Scripture which are "*hard to be understood.*" The *first* example is contained in a little essay, which is a review of a Pamphlet on the Godhead and Atonement of Christ, and which has, perhaps, been already noticed in your periodical. The writer of the Essay, who is well known in England, says, referring to the author of the pamphlet, "That my readers need not be surprised, at Theophilus and his friends finding their peculiar doctrines taught where no person else can discover them, I will here notice the heads of a sermon which I heard delivered, in the place in which Theophilus and his friends regularly assemble, about two years ago. The text chosen for the instruction of the people, was, Solomon's Song, iii. 9, 10. *King Solomon made himself a chariot of the wood of Lebanon. He made the pillars thereof of silver, the bottom thereof of gold, the covering of it of purple ; the midst thereof being paved with love, for the daughters of Jerusalem.* It was observed that *King Solomon was the representative of Christ,—The chariot, the church of God,—The wood of Lebanon, the materials of the church, or the elect,—The silver pillars, the seven different administrations of the spirit,—The bottom of gold, the Divinity of Christ,—The purple covering, the righteousness of Christ imputed to his people,—Being paved with love, was God's love to the elect, and their love to him ! ! !*"

The *second* example, being the production of a home educated divine, cannot reasonably be expected to come up to the niceties and distinctions contained in this quotation : But, though it may not equal the refined Calvinism of England, it has the merit of some imagination. The *pastor loci* of the Ballynahinch congregation, in connexion with a Synod which has *one human test and eight human overtures* as its standard of faith and practice, desirous, like his cotemporary on the other side of the channel, of commenting on the Song of Solomon, thought proper, on Sunday the eighth of September, to lecture on the first chapter of that beautiful and poetic book. Without dwelling on the incoherent observations which he made on the introductory verses, I shall simply notice some of his remarks on the 14th verse: *My beloved is unto me as a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of Engedi.* After remarking on the marginal reading of *camphire*, which is *cypress*, and throwing out several far-fetched conjectures, he came to the *marrow* of his discourse, and made the extraordinary discovery to his wondering audience, that by the term *camphire* was meant the *atonement* which was made by Christ to his Father, for the sins of his people, and that such was the opinion of many ancient and modern commentators. Extraordinary opinion, astonishing interpretation!! What man, but one of great erudition, could have seen through the skill of these olden and more modern expositors!!

This reverend Lecturer, who seems wise beyond what is written, would confer an unspeakable favour on Christendom, were he to inform the present generation, why Christ never taught the Calvinistic doctrine of satisfaction, now called, by *modern* Calvinists, the *atonement*:—why he never taught personal and eternal election:—personal and eternal reprobation:—or that there are three persons in the Godhead; or that God makes infant children corrupt and vile, and then punishes them eternally for being what he made them, unless his wrath be appeased.

If he condescend to enlighten the world with his interpretations of divine Revelation, he will please consider the infirmities of Unitarians, and keep before them the difference between the *weakness* of human nature, and the *original sin* which they are said to inherit from Adam;—by the former, they think themselves objects

of compassion, by the latter, others think them liable to endless misery. In descanting on the *atonement*, he will please say, if God can be said to forgive a debt, which Christ, it is alleged, has paid. I have humbly to request, that he will keep up the contrast between mercy and satisfaction—forgiveness and payment—free grace and purchased favour—and not be confounding the one with the other, or be representing the *same God* as acting in contradictory and opposite characters; sometimes forgiving freely, at other times requiring a satisfaction.

DISCIPULUS.

ON MAHOMETANISM.

MAHOMETANISM is a compound of Paganism, Judaism, and Christianity. Mahomet, who was born at Mecca in 571, believing that the Pentateuch was given to Moses, the Psalter to David, and the Gospel to Jesus Christ, assumed the character of a prophet, and maintained that as Adam was the first prophet, he was the last. Desirous, like many others, of giving a finishing stroke to Divine Revelation, and of making it speak what his ambition wished, he did not construct his creed—the Koran,—in the way of Synods or Councils, first admitting the possibility of their erring, and then claiming the assent and consent of their members, but he boldly and openly laid claim to inspiration. The Koran was originally written in Arabic, and has been translated into English by different men of eminence. The translation by Mr. Sale is generally esteemed the most correct, and the discourse which he has prefixed to it by way of introduction, is very valuable to the reader. In this preliminary discourse he says, “the Mahomedans divide their religion into two distinct parts—*faith* and *practice*; and teach that it is built on *five fundamental points*; one belonging unto faith, and the other *four* to practice. The *first* is,—“that there is no God but the true God; and that Mahomet is his apostle;” under which they comprehend six distinct branches, viz: 1, Belief in God; 2, in his angels; 3, in his scriptures; 4, in his prophets; 5, in the resurrection and day of judgment; and 6, in his absolute decree and predestination, both of good and evil.”

“The *four* points relating to practice, are, 1, Prayer; under which are comprehended those washings, or puri-

fications which are necessary preparations required before prayer : 2, Alms ; 3, Fasting ; 4, the Pilgrimage to Mecca."

"As to the Scriptures," Mr. Sale says, "the Mahomedans are taught by the Koran, that God, in divers ages of the world, gave revelations of his will in writing to several prophets ; the whole and every word of which it is absolutely necessary for a good Moslem to believe. The number of these sacred books was, according to them, 104, of which *ten* were given to Adam, *fifty* to Seth, *thirty* to Edris or Enoch, *ten* to Abraham, and the other *four* being the Pentateuch, (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy being counted but *one*,) the Psalms, the Gospel, and the Koran, were successively delivered to Moses, David, Jesus, and Mahommed ; which last being the seal of the prophets, those revelations are now closed, and no more to be expected."

Thus it appears, that though a man should believe "the whole and every word" of the Law, as given by Moses, and of the Gospel, as given by Christ, his faith would go for nothing, unless he added to it the Koran. And why should Christians wonder at this Mahometan demand upon profession, when the majority of Christian churches make *similar* demands upon their members, refusing membership upon the faith of the Holy Scriptures, and requiring for fellowship, belief in the contents of books of human contrivance!! The Mahomedans are estimated at 140,000,000, and the Christians at 175,000,000. The Koran contains, like every other human creed, a number of phrases and half-phrases from the Old and New Testament ; but the great body of it is the composition of the compilers. Perhaps I may trouble you to insert a few quotations from it in your next number.

A BIBLE BELIEVER.

ON THE CRUSADES.

THE Crusades, (Croisades,) sometimes called the Holy Wars, were expeditions carried on by Christians against the Infidels, for the recovery of the Holy Land ; and so denominated, because those who engaged in the undertaking wore a *Cross* on their dress, and had one on their standards. There is scarcely any event record-

ed in history, which was so calamitous to Europe in general, as the Crusades; for besides the multitudes who lost their lives in those mad expeditions, the survivors brought back the leprosy, which destroyed and made wretched greater numbers at home. But there is hardly any evil, which, under the providence of God, is not productive of some good; and so the Crusades established the liberties of the humblest orders of men, dispersed the wealth, and broke the power of the great barons. The Crusades not only made Europe better acquainted with the eastern world, but were the means of introducing much useful knowledge into that part of the earth, which was then sunk in ignorance. These unexpected advantages, however, cannot justify the bloody enterprises of the fanatical Christians who commenced and carried on the holy massacre.

The Crusades were *eight* in number. The *first* was undertaken in 1095, at the solicitation of the GREEK EMPEROR, and Patriarch of Jerusalem. The princes who joined the expedition, met at Constantinople, and Godfrey of Bouillon had an army at his command of 10,000 horse, and 70,000 foot. Syria, Antioch, and Jerusalem, were taken at this time; and the Christians immediately after, gained the battle of Ascalon, against the Sultan of Egypt. This victory put an end to the first Crusade; for the princes and lords, with those who followed them, believing they had fully accomplished the vow they had made, took their leave of Godfrey, who had been chosen king, at Jerusalem, and returned to their respective countries.

The *second* Crusade was in 1144, and was headed by the Emperor CONRAD III, and LEWIS VII. of France. The Emperor's army was destroyed by the treachery of Maurice, the Greek Emperor, and that of Lewis was forced to quit the siege of Damascus.

The *third* Crusade was in 1188, after SALADINE, Sultan of Egypt, had taken Jerusalem. The Emperor FREDERICK BARBAROSSA; FREDERICK, Duke of Swabia; LEOPOLD, Duke of Austria; and above sixty more of the chief princes of the Empire, with several *Bishops*, were the leaders on this occasion. Frederick Barbarossa, and his son Frederick, Duke of Swabia, having died, which proved the ruin of their armies, RICHARD, king of England, and PHILIP, king of France, joined the

Christians, and brought Ptolemais to surrender. Philip, returning home, left Richard, who, on specified conditions, concluded a peace with Saladine.

The *fourth* Crusade was undertaken, after Saladine's decease, by the Emp. HENRY VI. 1195. The Christians, having gained several battles against the Infidels, hastened home in consequence of the Emperor's death.

The *fifth* Crusade took place in 1198, by the artifice of Pope INNOCENT III. The army that marched into Palestine was unsuccessful in their efforts to recover the Holy Land.

The *sixth* Crusade occurred in 1228, when the Emperor FREDERICK went to the Holy Land, and made a peace with the Sultan for ten years, the Sultan, agreeing to deliver to the Christians the towns of Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth, Thoron and Sidon; reserving the temple of Jerusalem, in which the Saracens might perform the free exercise of their law. RICHARD, Earl of Cornwall, and brother of HENRY III. king of England, arrived in Palestine a few years after the peace, and obtained some lands in Palestine, but the Corasmins in the course of three or four years fell upon the Christians in Palestine, and totally expelled them.

The *seventh* Crusade was led on by St. LEWIS, King of France, in 1249. After some battles, his army was defeated, and he himself was taken prisoner. In a short time a truce was concluded for ten years, and Damietta being given up by the Christians, as a ransom for the unfortunate king, he returned home in 1254.

The *eighth* crusade was commanded by the same prince in 1270, but in laying siege to Tunis, and without success, he died in the middle of his enterprise. His son PHILIP the Bold, and CHARLES, king of Sicily, prosecuted the siege, and brought the king of Tunis to agree to a truce for ten years, upon the condition that he would set all the slaves of his kingdom at liberty; that he should permit the Dominican and Franciscan Friars to preach the gospel in his territories, to build monasteries, and baptize all who should desire it:—and, besides giving these privileges, that he would yearly pay to CHARLES a sum of *money*. About this time prince Edward of England, with a small force, went to the Holy Land; but, being unable to achieve any matter of importance, he soon returned, after which Ptolemais was taken and plundered by the Soldan, of Egypt, and the Christians dispossessed of all Syria.

Thus ended the Holy Wars, which were carried on by unholy means. From the *first* to the *last* crusade was a period of 175 years, and no man can now count the lives that were sacrificed, or measure the blood that was shed in these fanatic expeditions, in which the Christians stained the precepts of the peaceful Gospel with human blood, and the Infidels degraded the reason by which they were distinguished from the beasts that perish. It is not only the bounden duty, but the true interests of all men and all nations, to live in peace and amity with one another.

PACIFICUS.

EQUANIMITY.

COMPOSURE of mind has in every age been a favourite object with those men who studied the perfection and happiness of human nature with greatest assiduity. To them it appeared evident, that these great objects were incompatible with a state of turbulence and anxiety. Solicitude about mean and trifling concerns, and a peevish fretful turn of mind, are manifestly inconsistent with dignity as well as comfort, and those sublime emotions excited by the struggles of ambition, contests for wealth or heroic enterprise, though they may sometimes occasion exquisite enjoyment, and even exalted virtue, can scarcely fail to involve men more frequently in atrocious crimes, and plunge them into an abyss of misery. The whole course of human experience makes it evident, that whatever gratification these tumults of mind may yield on rare and uncertain occasions, they cannot be depended upon for permanent felicity.

On the contrary, repose of mind, even of the least philosophical kind, is attended with ease and contentment, if not with enjoyment; and with innocence, if not virtue. Even that stupid inactivity and indifference, which we sometimes meet with, is at least free from pain and guilt. If our tranquillity of mind arise from a liberal and disinterested indifference to selfish advantages and worldly goods, it certainly exempts us from a load of care, and is entitled to a share of praise. If our equanimity be the consequence of a rational estimation of temporal and sensual enjoyments, it cannot fail to be accompanied with such conscious dignity, as must elevate us both in our own conception and in that of all

wise and good men ; and if this be exalted to its greatest height by religious considerations, and at the same time corrected by that sober attention to worldly affairs, which Christianity allows and requires, this quality and frame of mind may be said to have attained its highest elevation : for this combines that spiritual-mindedness, which is so becoming in an intellectual, moral, and immortal Being, with an attention to those relations, in which we are placed by God ; and the duties of which are the work which we were sent into the world to do. Thus while we elevate ourselves in the scale of existence, we are instrumental in promoting that plan of Providence, which aims at the happiness and perfection of all rational creatures.

This tranquil frame of mind is not only productive of happiness and virtue, but is also founded upon reason. The quiet and secure enjoyment of conscious virtue was the most sublime idea, that the ancient philosophers were able to form of celestial felicity and the happiness of the gods ; and even though Equanimity were not consistent with active virtue, it would still preserve the mind in such a state of purity, innocence and freedom from violent passions, as merits no small degree of commendation. But this is not the fact : equanimity is compatible with the most vigorous exertion of all our powers : and if we can unite these qualities of uninterrupted equanimity and active virtue, we may be satisfied, that we have made one of the noblest and most difficult attainments, of which human nature is yet capable. We are moreover, at the same time, acting agreeably to reason, even in its highest excellence, as directed by Divine Wisdom, and exemplified in the life of Jesus. How often are we ourselves ashamed of those trifles, which we have suffered to agitate our souls ! How inconsiderable do many of our most serious undertakings often appear upon reflection ! How much do we overrate those misfortunes, which ruffle the even current of our minds ! and how soon are the deepest wounds of the heart closed by the lenient hand of time !

In the remainder of this paper, I shall endeavour to suggest such rules as may guide us to this height of philosophical and Evangelical excellence.

1. The first is, to judge truly of the value of things. Human events and worldly possessions are the things which disturb the soul, and at the same time the mate-

rials, upon which the moral powers must work. Divine and spiritual subjects seldom interrupt our tranquillity, and we are in little danger of overrating their importance; but temporal good and evil are equally subject to misconception and false estimation. Wherever our passions are engaged, we are in danger of self-deception. Even Religion, when it interests our self-love, our vanity, our presumption or our fear, is liable to great misapprehension and abuse, and the cause of great trouble and even distraction of mind. For the same reason we are liable to self-deceit, when we attempt to estimate our own worth; or appreciate any of those circumstances, which affect our hopes or fears, our desires or aversions. The more violently these passions are excited, the more is the tranquillity of our minds disturbed; and therefore a just appreciation of such objects is the first mode of securing Equanimity. It is not meant, that even this will bestow perfect repose upon the mind: this is impossible; for after we have reduced our expectations of success, and our dread of disappointment and misfortune, our love of pleasure, and fear of pain, as low as the most philosophical temper can require, or as our connexion with human affairs can justify: still the events of life must operate upon those feelings and passions, which are essential to the activity and energy of the soul, and of which, whether they be good or bad, we cannot divest ourselves, while we are connected with the body. This reasonable estimate of temporal concerns will preserve us from a fretful and discontented temper; from fits of peevishness and passion and excessive perturbations, which so often are followed by self-reproach, expose us to the contempt of the world, or involve us in sins, which our own hearts abhor.

2. The second Rule for preserving Equanimity, or evenness of temper, is to form a true judgment of our power over external things; for this will teach us to be less disquieted about those over which we have no control, and to confine our desires to what is in our power.

Upon the distinction between things in our power, and things out of our power, or in other words between internal and external objects, the Stoics founded their system of philosophy; and although they affected an absurd and impracticable indifference to every thing but the state of their own minds, they have delivered many useful and practicable precepts upon this subject. As

this unconcern about worldly good in a moderate degree is recommended by our Saviour, it is not unbecoming a Christian to profit by the admonition of the Heathens.

When we have complied with these two rules of regulating our attachment to things by their real value, and by our power over them, we have made no small proficiency in equanimity. From the first we shall learn that few enjoyments or possessions are of sufficient importance to justify agitation of mind : and the second will teach us to confine our wishes and exertions to such of these as are in our power, and if we govern our conduct by a due regard to the worth of the various objects of pursuit, and our capacity for obtaining them, we shall not be violently agitated about those worthless, unattainable, or uncertain objects which are the chief causes of disquiet of mind and irregularity of conduct.

3. The next step is to become duly sensible of the precariousness even of those worldly goods, which we esteem valuable, and which we may reasonably expect to obtain. Our estimation of worldly goods, and consequently our desire to possess them, must be affected by the shortness and uncertainty of the tenure by which they are held ; and if they be once obtained, our fear of losing them and our grief at being deprived of them, ought to be moderated by the same conviction ; for the mind will thus be prepared for such misfortunes. If we habitually flatter ourselves that we shall enjoy the society of our families and friends, to a protracted old age, we shall no doubt be violently disturbed when their lives appear to be in danger, and vehemently afflicted, when they die ; but if we have brought our minds to consider them as human and mortal creatures, liable every day to be carried off by the most trivial accidents ; if we consider that it is a law of human nature, that a great majority of the human race perish in very early youth, and that thousands actually die every hour of every day, the mind will then be better prepared for such events.

There are many trite and obvious reflections, which come in aid of this precept. Our anxiety about the length of the term, during which we may enjoy our worldly advantages, will be diminished, when we look back upon the repeated disappointments which we have already experienced, without any material diminution of our comforts ; when we contemplate the happiness, which we still enjoy after so many losses ; when we an-

ticipate the little effect that our present misfortunes will have upon our situation a few years hence ; and when we consider how frequently good arises out of evil ; how often the tears of disappointment are effaced by unexpected blessings ; and how often, while we are taking leave of one comfort, another is on the way to supply its place, and already heaving in sight.

4. My next advice is, not to be too sanguine in your expectations. With whatever advantages a sanguine temper may be attended, it is always a source of disquiet and perturbation. Our hopes are commonly said to exceed our enjoyments. If by this be meant, that they afford greater pleasure than our subsequent comforts, the only conclusion from this maxim is, that they are the parents of vexation and disappointment, embittering our substantial pleasures, and exchanging them for fantastical expectations : Whatever relish some palates may have for such airy food, I believe the generality of men will agree in preferring possession to expectation, sober enjoyment of the good things of life to high-flavoured hopes and unsubstantial visions ; especially since a short-lived indulgence of unreasonable hopes will damp our relish for permanent felicity, since our disappointment is always in proportion to our expectation ; and those who are most sanguine are in general most easily dejected, and most grievously mortified by any unforeseen calamity or unlooked for change.

Those, therefore, who look for real happiness, will guard against a sanguine temper ; for beside the mortifications which it occasions, it often benumbs our active powers, and thereby defeats its own projects. It thus exchanges the sober certainty of success for groundless hopes ; and robs us of the pleasure as well as the profit of activity. It keeps the mind in a feverish agitation, and an ineffectual bustle, dissatisfied with the present, mortified with the past, and forming fallacious ideas of futurity : that is, disgusted at all the realities that are and that have been, and depending for happiness on that which does not exist, and never may ; considering life as a lottery, and wasting our time in indolent expectation of a prize, or indolent despondence at a blank.

5. In the next place we should cultivate independence of mind, and indifference to the opinion of the world. If the mind depend for its tranquillity on any thing external, it must be subject to continual disturbance, and

there is nothing more likely to trouble the minds of most men, than the opinion which those around them entertain of their sentiments and actions. Whatever respect should be paid to character and reputation, it should never be suffered to rise to such a degree as to destroy the balance and repose of the soul; nor should it ever be entertained as a principle of action. It should be chiefly confined to such subjects as relate to points of ceremony and exterior deportment, and be considered as a very subordinate object in the conduct of life. Our primary motive, should be a reverence for the revealed will of God; our second the native feelings and well-digested convictions of our own consciences; and next, but far beneath, a regard to the innocent customs and opinions of mankind. This subordination of principles will preserve us from fluctuation and tumult of soul. We shall be little elated by praise, or dejected by censure, or provoked by slander. A man, who habitually looks to the approbation of God, will pay little regard to the praise of man: one that consults the sentiments of his own heart, enjoys its applause, or submits to its reproaches, will be indifferent to the opinions of those who cannot be so well informed of its state; and a man of modesty and candour will frankly confess, that he thinks worse of himself than his worst enemy will venture to insinuate, and that his character is more indebted to the ignorance, than injured by the malice of his calumniator.

Though things of good report are recommended to us by the Apostle, it is evident, from his own example, the general strain of Scripture, and the express declarations of our Lord, that this good report means the opinion of a very select number, and that honour, fame, and reputation are never to be directing principles. The wisdom of this doctrine was never more evident than now; for never was there such a confusion of principle even among well-meaning people, of every class, nor ever, perhaps, a more rapid progress of dissipation and folly among those who regulate their conduct by fashion. What would become of religion, morals, and manners, if these fashionable people were to regulate the principles and practice of the world? What chance of reformation could we have, if serious and determined Christians did not look to some higher principle, and behold with contempt such shocking perversion of mo-

rality, and such a shameless dereliction of piety and decency. In such times the pious and virtuous parts of mankind must be peculiarly cautious of respecting any authority except the express will of God, and the genuine dictates of conscience; and often should say to themselves, "whatsoever others may do, we and our house will serve the Lord."

6. The next rule for acquiring and preserving equanimity is, to look to the end of our pilgrimage. Fix your eyes upon the goal, and your heart upon the prize, and you will be little incommoded by the labour of the race, or the petty obstacles that occur in your course. Contemplate the haven to which you steer, and the coldest and roughest blast that wafts you to the end of your voyage, will be grateful as the breath of vernal zephyrs. As the pilgrim rejoices in those difficulties which tend to enhance his merit and recommend him to the object of his vow, so will the strenuous and persevering Christian preserve the tranquillity of his mind, amid the trivial disasters of this mortal life. Looking only to his final destination, he will view every thing with pleasure or pain, only as it obstructs or conduces to the end; and while he is conscious of using his best exertions to finish his course, and accomplish the purpose of his creation, his equanimity will be little disturbed by the trifling casualties of a transitory life. He will forget what he has left behind, bound over the obstacles which obstruct his progress, despise the allurements which would stop his career, or beguile him from the course, and press forward for the prize.

Here it is evident that we must depend chiefly, if not entirely, on a habitual cultivation of pious thoughts, and the practice of religious duties. This is the godly path in which we must run, and from which we should never allow ourselves to be diverted; and if worldly pursuits should too frequently withdraw us from this holy rule of life, as they assuredly will, we should look forward to the more solemn offices and ordinances of religion to restore us to that godly composure, that pious equanimity, that resolute perseverance in the paths of wisdom, from which we have been seduced by the vexatious vanities, and laborious follies of this transitory scene.

7. The last precept that I shall recommend to you is, to accommodate yourselves to the order of Providence. Whatever speculations you may form concerning the

freedom or the necessity of human actions, be assured that the grand train of events is ordered by celestial wisdom: whatever apprehensions you may feel in any crisis of your affairs, depend upon it that all things are working together for general good. Consider it as your duty and happiness to be subservient to the designs of the Almighty. Let it be your highest honour to promote with cheerfulness that great scheme of felicity and virtue; and glory in the difficulty of the part assigned you in this great drama. This principle will preserve you from all violent and unbecoming emotions. When relieved from all anxiety concerning the event and catastrophe, you will not be agitated or discomposed by the intermediate incidents. You will feel that your present honour and future perfection and felicity depend on the cheerfulness and zeal with which you perform your part, and support the character assigned you. If you be a parent, study to be the best of parents; if a child, the most affectionate and dutiful of children; if a master, most equitable and indulgent; if a servant, most diligent and faithful; if rich, be the most humble and charitable of the rich; and if you sustain the part of a beggar, strive to be the most contented of all beggars. Neither repine at your situation nor despise it; for in every station, he that conforms to his circumstances is co-operating with the Creator of all things, and the Disposer of all events; whose ends are often more effectually promoted by the meanest of his creatures than by the more exalted.

To sum up the whole,—form a true estimate of the value of external things, and you will escape most of those errors and passions which make the world a scene of tumult and guilt: justly appreciate your power over them, and you will not fix your heart upon what you cannot hope to enjoy: consider the short and precarious tenure by which you hold all worldly possessions, and you will part with them without distraction of mind: be not too sanguine in your hopes, and you will not be subject to any grievous disappointment: be indifferent to the opinion of the world, anxious only for the praise of him who seeth the heart, and you will be tranquil and composed though all men revile you: rest your happiness on the completion of your journey, and you will be little discomposed by the jolts and stoppages of

a rugged road : place yourself under the guidance of Providence, and you will feel little anxiety about the progress or termination of your peregrination.

In short, cultivate calmness and composure of mind, and you will escape most of the calamities and sins which embitter human life and dishonour our immortal nature : for the bitterness of misfortune arises from our ungoverned affections and aversions ; and all our sins from the unruliness of our passions. A rational and religious composure deadens our sensibility to affliction, and breaks our falls ; and vices are seldom indulged, or crimes committed, while our rational and moral powers retain their just authority. It would be hard to select an atrocious crime or pernicious vice, that any man could be guilty of while in a state of equanimity and tranquillity of mind. The man who has attained this frame and temperament, will be able to say, with St. Paul, "I am troubled on every side ; yet not distressed : perplexed, but not in despair : persecuted, but not forsaken : cast down, but not destroyed."

On a survey of society, this virtue appears to be at a very low ebb. The deficiency is notorious in our Parliamentary debates, and in all municipal and popular assemblies, and meetings for the discussion of politics and even religion. We look in vain for it at the bar, and often regret its absence from the pulpit. It is, I believe, seldom to be found among men of business, and the want of it is frequently to be deplored in private life and social intercourse. How often is friendly society interrupted by impetuosity and impatience of contradiction, eagerness to speak, and unwillingness to hear ! In these respects even savages are said to furnish us with models. How seldom do we meet with modest assertion, or candid acquiescence ! How few are there that do not contend rather for victory than truth ! Truth may sometimes be struck out by collision, but is rarely discovered by patient investigation, or calm discussion.

The Society of Friends is the only class of people noted for equanimity and evenness of temper. It would be well worth while to enquire how this character has been attained. It may arise from a combination of causes with which I am unacquainted ; but there is one that is obvious to all, and perhaps sufficient of itself to produce this effect. I mean the soft and deliberate

mode of speaking to which they are habituated from childhood, and which thus becomes hereditary. This may operate both as a cause and an effect, and sometimes as both, by mutual action and reaction. Calmness of temper will produce softness of language, and mildness of speech will preserve moderation of mind. Angry emotions cannot be communicated in a whisper. Violent passion expressed in a soft tone would only excite laughter, and if a man were to utter denunciations of wrath in a pious strain he could scarcely avoid laughing at himself.

Our irascible propensities resemble certain inflammable vapours which explode on mingling with the air; but if confined, remain harmless, and are speedily dissipated. They take fire when they gain vent by words, but if suppressed they are soon smothered, and gain no vent even in our own bosoms. This subject deserves the serious attention of all parents and teachers.

NEMO.

TO THE REV. S. DILL.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,—There is no feeling more common to our nature, than to expect, that the evidence which convinces us should have the same effect upon the minds of others. We are amazed, that exercising the understandings which God has given them, others should fail to discover what we discern so plainly, and we can scarcely avoid attributing to wilful blindness the opposition given to what we regard as the clearest and most convincing proofs. In nothing is that “charity which thinketh no evil,” and which therefore should not hastily prefer a railing accusation against any, more severely tried. And, perhaps, one of the greatest evils connected with theological controversy, is the acrimonious spirit in which too many indulge, which leads them to attribute the very worst motives to their opponents; and to complete their injustice, by raising against them the charge of some *odious* and almost *forgotten heresy*; whilst there is the clearest evidence, that the opinions, whether right or wrong, have been adopted, not from reading an antiquated and exploded theology; but from a careful and diligent perusal of the Bible. Now, that this should take place among the crowd of common controversialists is not, perhaps, to be thought

strange; but that *meek* and *saintly* men like you and me, and our brethren in the ministry, who profess to be possessed of no ordinary degree of "Divine grace," and who should therefore be examples to others of gentleness and forbearance, should, not unfrequently, be found in the van of this severity of censure, is, to say the least of it, a melancholy instance of human weakness. And yet when I read language, such as the following, which too frequently disfigures your pamphlet, applied to Dr. Millar, and others of your opponents: "what could have blinded them," &c., "judicial blindness," &c., "with what unprincipled recklessness," &c. &c. &c., and yet remember that these men are perhaps as sincere lovers of the truth, as anxious for its propagation, and as deeply concerned to save their own souls and those of others, as either you or I can possibly be; surely this should guard us against censures not only harsh, but frequently unjust. A zeal for the truth will not justify such expressions, nor can any thing be more injurious to its interests.

In my last I promised to review your explanation of the two texts of Scripture by which you have chosen to express your views of "the origin of the Divine Sonship;" and to this task I now proceed, with, I trust, that seriousness of mind which the importance of the subject demands; and, at the same time, that deference for your judgment which I assure you I sincerely feel. And yet, I confess it has always appeared to me, that the account of the miraculous conception is better fitted to be read devoutly in the closet, than to be dragged before the gaze of day, in the heat of controversy, carried on in language not always the most guarded and select. On this subject I have found great difficulty to express myself with that plainness and delicacy which is required, and how far after all I have succeeded, must be left to the judgment of others. Be it remembered, however, that this difficulty has not arisen from any doubts I entertain respecting this portion of divine revelation; for to me there is no part of scripture which appears more important, or that has had a greater influence in fixing the opinions I entertain of the one supreme eternal—the Most High God; and of his only begotten Son, our Saviour; but I do fear the consequences to which levity of mind too frequently leads, in reading

such discussions; and I too well know the handle which the sceptic, the common enemy of our common Christianity, will make of them.

You tell us p. 63, "there is not in the Bible a more distinct or satisfactory recognition of the all-important doctrine of the Trinity, than is furnished in the passage under consideration." Now sir, I am extremely happy at all times in agreeing with you, and here we are perfectly agreed. I most readily admit no portion of scripture states the doctrine of a Trinity *more plainly*; and how plainly that is we shall see hereafter. Let us commence with John i. 14. "And the word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." After objecting, in no very measured terms, to the explanation of Dr. Millar, the advocate of Eternal Generation, you proceed, p. 54, to give the following paraphrase of these words: the "Divine Word, who was in equal fellowship with God before the earth was, and was himself God, the creator of all things, became incarnate, and in the form and nature of man, tabernacled among men full of grace and truth, and we, his disciples, bear testimony to the resplendent perfections, divine and human, that were manifested in him; we beheld the glory indeed of the only begotten of the Father." Now in this, three things appear to me objectionable. The 1st, I would fondly hope, is a mere verbal inaccuracy, and I notice it only because it conveys an unscriptural idea. You say the Divine Word was the *creator*, when you should have said the *maker* of all things. You know the distinction between creator and maker. To create is to *form* out of nothing; to make is to *form* out of materials already prepared. No person can doubt the critical knowledge of language possessed by the translators of our Bible, and they clearly make this distinction. Thus, for instance, they translate Gen. i. 1. "In the beginning God *created* the heavens and the earth;" that is, formed them out of nothing, otherwise matter must have been eternal. But they translate John i. 3, "All things were *made*"—not created—"by him, and without him was not any thing made"—not created—"that was made." This is also the meaning which you attach to the word in your own explanation of it, John i. 14. Speaking of the word *made* flesh, you say, "In this divine and mysterious

generation, we do not admit a *production in any way out of nothing*; not of the human nature, which, by conception, was *formed* out of the *true substance of the woman*." Now this is, you tell us, the true import of the phrase the "word was *made* (*ἐγένετο*) flesh," and it is the *very same word* which occurs three times in the third verse of John's Gospel already quoted. Now no writer, and least of all an inspired writer, could use the *same word*, placed in such close position, in two such extremely dissimilar meanings as that which *your own* explanation here, and your paraphrase quoted above, would give it, and I cannot suppose you would allow your upright mind to be so far warped by the love of system as to support a favourite dogma by such forced interpretations of the word of God. Believing that you have been merely guilty of a verbal inaccuracy; correct the mistake, and then so far you and I are agreed. I most firmly believe that all things were *made* by Jesus Christ, our Lord, employed by his and our heavenly Father, according to the declaration of an inspired apostle, Heb. i. 2. "by his Son whom he hath *appointed* heir of all things, *by whom* also He (God,) *made*"—not created,—*"the worlds."* Quere, is he who is *appointed* heir of all things, equal to him who *appointed* him, and made him heir? And farther, was he "Son" when he made the worlds, or is the inspired writer liable to verbal inaccuracies as well as the Rev. S. Dill?

2. I object to your assertion, that "the Divine word was in equal fellowship with God." This equality of fellowship is a mere gratuitous assumption of your own, neither to be found in the text, nor justified by what precedes it, and therefore, improperly introduced. The text says not one word about equality, nay, the want of it is directly implied: "we beheld, says John, his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father," &c., and this, as you properly remark, "was not the glory which he had with the Father before the world was, but one which could be seen, which must have been subordinate, and therefore, not equal. On your own interpretation, therefore, the text directly contradicts your paraphrase, and denies an "equality of fellowship."

And surely you will not pretend to justify this equality, upon the declaration made John i. 1, "and the Word was *with* God." Let us see the consequences to which this would lead. I know you are, in common

with myself, a believer in the doctrine that "after death the souls of believers do immediately pass into glory." You believe, also, the promises of the scriptures, which repeatedly declare, that then we shall be "*with Christ*;" as for instance, "so shall we be for ever with the Lord," (Christ;) and again John xvii. 24, "That they also, whom thou hast given me, *be with me*," &c. On your own principles you are bound to interpret these words to mean that all believers now in Heaven, are in "*equal fellowship*" *with Christ*. But how then can that Scripture be true which saith, "Wherefore God hath highly exalted him, (Christ,) and given him a name that is above every name," &c.; when according to you, millions of believers now in heaven, have an "equal fellowship," and therefore an equal name. Nay, the consequences do not stop here; according to you the Son is the second person of the Trinity, and therefore God equal with the Father. But to be with Christ, as the souls of all departed believers now are, is to be in equal fellowship with him, that is, I presume, equal with him. But "things that are equal to the same, are equal to one another;" therefore, all believers now in heaven, are in equal fellowship with the Father. But is not this proving a little too much? I know, indeed, my last proof is a mere maxim of *carnal reason*, and therefore perhaps you will be inclined to deny it; and I do not know that I shall be able to prove its correctness from scripture. Confine yourself in future, I request you, to the scriptural statement of the act, that the *logos* "was with God," and therefore not the God with whom he was, and if there be *but one God*, not that God. When you lose yourself in the mazes of an unscriptural and contradictory theology, you fall into all the absurdities of your system. Thus, to be in "equal fellowship," can only be true of two separate distinct beings, that is, of two Gods; and thus you contradict the plainest declarations of scripture, that there is but one God; yea, and you are found "a false witness before that God," for while your language thus proves there are *two*, you affirm there is but *one*. To say that this oneness is of essence, is a mere gratuitous unscriptural assumption of which the Bible knows nothing. There is not a single text of scripture which ever speaks of the essence of God; and surely, to inculcate the worship of an *essence*, is an absurdity too great for even an Athanasian divine.

3. I object to your explanation which says, "he was himself God," meaning as you evidently do, by these words, the "Supreme Deity of the Lord Jesus." I have already shown, that there is no authority for this in the text, nay, that it directly implies the contrary. But as this involves in it the most important part of the controversy between you and me, it will require a more particular consideration.

Of all the arguments which have ever been put forward in defence of the Trinity, that founded upon the use of the term God, whether in the Greek or Hebrew languages, has surprised me most. I am not surprised that men believe in a trinity; because the most absurd opinions, both political and theological, are every day adopted with the utmost sincerity. I am not surprized, that even a trinity is pronounced to be fundamental to Christianity, though the term never once occurs in the Bible, and a *three one God* is utterly unknown there; nay, though there is not a text in the *whole word of God* which says, that three persons, or three any things, are God. It is a "*peculiar doctrine of the Bible*," just because it is not found therein. But what does indeed amaze me, is the arguments by which this wonderful peculiarity is supported. When I hear intelligent and learned Divines, well acquainted with the phraseology of the Bible, such as Dr. Chalmers and you, pronounce that it is as "plain as vocables can make it," that Christ is God, because he is styled God in the New Testament, I am indeed astounded. Do you venture to tell your people the varied acceptation of the word God in the Holy Scriptures? If you do, you never venture to publish it to the world. Taking advantage of the ignorance of the uneducated, who know only, that the term God is in the English language applied exclusively to one Being, the Almighty, you lead them to believe, that such is the scriptural application of the term, and insist that because Christ is called God, he must therefore be the very supreme eternal. I solemnly protest, there is nothing in the whole controversy, has surprised me so much as this, except it be perhaps the argument which has been founded on the Hebrew plural of the word God, (*Elohim*). May I venture to declare what are my convictions with regard to the manner in which this argument has been put forward. I declare to you then, sir, most solemnly, it has always appeared to me,

“handling the word of God deceitfully,” and “keeping back a part of the counsel of God,” from those to whom it was most important the whole counsel of God should be known, to tell them, “It was as plain as vocables could make it, that Christ was God,” and yet not tell them also, as is notoriously not done, the different beings to whom in Scripture the term God is applied. I have also been surprised, that you should have ventured to tell your readers, that the plural term God, (Elohim) afforded an argument in defence of the trinity, which its impugnors could never answer, when you know it has been answered again and again; and that to these answers you never attempted a reply. I shall now proceed to state what the advocates of the sole SUPREMACY OF THE FATHER do unanswerably urge against this argument, and I entreat you may have the common Christian charity to shew me wherein I am in error.

1st. Then, am I in error when I say, that the term God, according to the idiom of the English language, is applied to one being only, the Almighty; and that to apply it to any other, would be the height of profanity?

2dly, Am I in error when I say, that in the Holy Scriptures this word is not used in this restricted sense, but that both in Hebrew and in Greek, it is applied to men and to angels, as well as to God? 3dly, Am I in error when I say, that, if we interpret the Holy Scriptures according to the restricted sense in which the word is used in the English language, we must fall into the grossest and most pernicious errors? If these observations are just, and to the only one that requires proof I shall proceed immediately, it then follows, 1st, that the term God, of itself, applied to any being, will not prove him either to be, or to be equal to, the one only living and true God. 2dly, That when this term is in Scripture applied to any being, except the one supreme Father of all, “who is over all and in us all,” a proper and becoming inquiry is, what is the dignity the term is intended to express?

Without attending to this, we should have Gods many, and Lords many, all receiving that homage and worship which are only due to the Almighty. Trinitarians overlooking, as I conceive, this plain principle of interpretation, pronounce Jesus Christ to be God, because he is called God in direct opposition to his own plain and distinct declaration, “My Father is greater than all, my

Father is greater than I ;” and thus follow the language of a system in opposition to the language of Christ himself. 3dly, That such an inquiry can never be pronounced sinful, when conducted with proper and becoming feelings. To consider what is the scriptural application of the term God in the Old and New Testaments, I shall now proceed, and this will form the best reply to your pretended unanswerable argument, founded on the word Elohim.

Believers in the supremacy of the Father have never considered this an unanswerable argument. I will tell you what they have said ; and they challenge you to the refutation. They have said, as I have already stated, that the term, in both the singular and plural form, is applied to men and angels as well as to God ; and therefore cannot prove a trinity in him, unless it prove, also, a trinity in the others. In the singular form it is applied, as I think, to Nebuchadnezzar. Ezek. xxxi. 11 ; compared with Jeremiah, xxvii. 4, 5, 6. I have therefore delivered him into the hand of the *mighty one* of the heathen ; in the original, bejad *El* gojim, into the hand of *a* God of the Gentiles. In its plural form, on which you place so much dependence as a proof of a trinity, it is applied to Moses, Exod. vii. 1. See I have made thee *a* God, in the original Elohim, to Pharaoh, &c. &c. Now, is Moses the Trinity ? And yet the argument is as good in the one case as in the other. Are there three persons in Moses ? But I had forgotten : when men were doting about trinities, and quidities, and essences, &c. &c. they did maintain that man was a trinity as well as God ; and to the same school, to which we are indebted for the one, do we owe the other. But, for my life, I never could understand how they made three persons in man, or how they established that each of them was “ the same in substance, and equal in power and glory.” Again, to angels, Psalms viii. 5. “ Thou hast made him, (man) a little lower than the angels, in the original Elohim, Gods ; or as you would have us believe, a little lower than the trinity ! Now, are the angels a trinity, and when Christ tells us he could pray the Father, and he would send him legions for his defence, does he only mean that these legions consisted of *three persons* ? Now, am I in error in these quotations : and if not, how can any man from a word of such general application, pretend on its plural form,

to prove a trinity? Is it not evident, from the two last quotations, that the word may signify either an individual, as in the case of Moses, or *millions* as applied to angels.

But granting all you can ask, still we maintain it can prove nothing for you. What you want is the proof of a *plurality* of *persons* in God; but this the word never can prove. The singular is *El, God*, the plural then, *Elohim*, must be *Gods* not *persons*; and thus you may prove, if you will, that there are more gods than one, not that there are more persons than one in God. And even admitting the absurdity of substituting persons for Gods, it will no more prove three than three thousand. Now, sir, is this no answer; or have you ever attempted a reply to such answers?

But, my dear sir, let me ask you solemnly, as in the presence of your God, do you mean to say that God would leave "an all-important doctrine," "one essential to salvation," and "one which except we believe, we shall without doubt perish everlastingly," to be decided by the *dubious* meaning of a Hebrew term, about which you, and I, and thousands capable of searching the Scriptures for themselves, are not agreed? Do you mean to say that millions of the unlearned, who can neither examine, nor understand the argument, are to hazard their eternal happiness upon the care, fidelity and honesty with which men like you and me search the scriptures; and thus place upon us *implicit faith* for their salvation? Why, the very worst features of Popery would be perfect mercy compared with this.

As little evidence can you derive from the use of the term *theos*, God, in the New Testament, in support of the "supreme Deity of Jesus Christ," as you have in the Hebrew term for God, in defence of a trinity. But as you will defend the equality of Christ, with his Father, upon the language of John, and "the word was with God, and the word was God," I shall proceed to examine this argument. The preceding observations clearly show that the term God, is not in Scripture restricted to one being. When, therefore, it is applied to any being, which renders its import doubtful, we are naturally led, first, to ask if there is any thing connected with the application of the term which would fix its meaning; if not, secondly, to examine other parts of the word of God, which will enable us to discover in

what sense it is employed. Two beings are evidently described in the first verse of the 1st chapter of John. The one the *logos*, and the other the God with whom he was; for that a being could be in fellowship with himself is an absurdity too great, for even an Athanasian Divine. Now, am I in error when I say, that with regard to these two beings whom you represent as in "equal fellowship," the word *theos*, God, is applied with a marked difference. The *Logos* is declared *to be with a Being*, who is called "ho *Theos*;"* but the *Logos* himself is only designated "*Theos*." Now, here is a difference as "plain as vocables can make it." This distinction is made by a sacred writer; and it is either intended to mark a difference, or it is not. If it is designed to mark a difference, then they are not equal, and the dispute is at an end. If it is not designed to mark a difference, then you have a *distinction* without a *difference* made by the pen of inspiration, where *no difference should have been made*, and none should have been made, if they are equal, and if that be not a mistake, then no writer ever committed a mistake. And who are they who thus charge mistakes upon the pen of inspiration? Why, men who like you, deserting the phraseology of the Bible, follow the creed of St. Athanasius, and shock our eyes and our ears with your triune Gods, your God-man, your unity of essence, consubstantialities, hypostatical unions, &c. &c.; terms that the word of God never knew, and yet affect a pious horror when the doctrines of God are translated literally and correctly, as if they were pagan and idolatrous.

The literal and correct translation of the 1st ver. in John's Gospel would be,—the word was with God and the word was *a* God; and except thus translated, we omit a difference plainly expressed by God himself in the original; I say by God himself, because Christ has said, "*my doctrine is not mine but his that sent me.*" Now for this distinction, we have, I conceive, the authority of John, chap. x. 33: "And because that thou being a man makest thyself *God*, in the original *a* God." The Jews never conceived that he could make himself Jehovah; or that he was their Jehovah, and therefore with the most classical elegance and propriety, John

* I quote the Greek article in the nominative as less likely to perplex the unlearned reader.

has written *a* God. And now that I have quoted this passage, will you allow me to call your attention to the evidence it affords of the doctrine I am advocating. Jesus is accused of blasphemy and of making himself *a* God. Now this was a capital offence according to the Mosaic law. To this charge of *felony*, what is his reply? Why, to explain away the offensive use of the term God; and to justify the application of it to himself upon the authority of the Scriptures, but most distinctly to disclaim his ever having applied it to himself. You, sir, are an honest and consistent trinitarian. If you should offend a humanitarian mob, by calling Christ what you believe him to be, the very eternal God, *would you act as Christ did?* Would you, when their indignation rose high, explain away the term by saying that in Scripture princes and magistrates were called Gods; and much more might he, whom the Father had appointed to a higher and holier office? And believing him to be the *very eternal God*, would you afterwards shrink out of your belief, by saying you only declared him to be "*the son of God*." So firmly am I convinced of your integrity, that I believe sooner than make such a declaration, you would forfeit life itself. Yet, if your doctrine be true, your Saviour is guilty of a weakness of which you are incapable!! I say again, the Holy Scriptures justify me in this translation of the passage. I shall quote from texts of Scripture invariably urged in defence of the "Supreme Deity of Jesus Christ:" Isaiah ix. 6. "Unto us *a* son is born," &c. and he shall be called, not *the*, as in our translation, but *a* "mighty God," &c. Rom. ix. 5. "Where are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all God," in the original *a* God blessed for ever.

But your pious horror is excited by thus converting the Bible into a Pagan book, as it would be, you think, if thus translated. Now, to this I say, it is not more pagan by this translation than what God has made it; and we should never be afraid to say literally and truly what God has commanded us to declare. But would you take the following pagan language, out of an *old unitarian* book that now lies before me, "See I have made thee *a* God to Pharaoh. Exod. vii. 1. Because thy heart is lifted up, and thou hast said I am *a* God, &c. yet thou art a man, and not *a* God, &c. Wilt thou say before him that slayeth thee, I am *a* God, &c. Ezek.

xxviii. 2, 9. Or what would you think of the still more pagan language, There be that are called *Gods*, as there are *Gods many*, &c. The Lord your God is God of *Gods*, Deut. x. 17. Psalm xcvii. 7. Worship him all ye *Gods*: Psalm cxxxvi. 2. O give thanks to the God of *Gods*. Now, according to you, to avoid this pagan appearance, the translators of our Bible should have falsified the word of God, and made Jehovah speak what he did not reveal. And yet I cannot avoid thinking they would have acted more consistently, as well as have executed their office as translators more faithfully, had they in every instance given us a correct and literal translation of the original, which in several instances they have not done.

I know not whether the Conductors of the Bible Christian will indulge me with another letter: but if they should, I shall in my next direct your attention to the description given of your supposed trinity in the account of the miraculous conception.

In the meantime I remain, respectfully yours,
Ballycarry, Sept. 21st, 1833. WM. GLENDY.

(From *Buckingham's Parliamentary Review*.)

LETTER TO EARL GREY ON THE PRESBYTERIAN POPULATION OF IRELAND.

“MY LORD, *Belfast, August 17, 1833.*

“A writer in No. XXVI. of *The Parliamentary Review*, who signed himself, ‘A Resident in Ireland,’ will lead your Lordship, if you confide in him, into several mistakes respecting the Presbyterian population of this country. Whether his mistatements have arisen from inadvertence or design I do not pretend to know, but I unhesitatingly aver, that his commnnication contains different errors.

“In directing your Lordship’s attention to “the Presbytery of Antrim, the Synod of Munster, and the Remonstrant Synod,” (p. 376) he estimated the ministers of these bodies at 60; the congregations at 40; and the “community,” by which he means, as I suppose, the number of souls under their care, at 4,000. As the congregations of these Synods are situated in very different parts of the Island, some of them being in Cork,

and others near the Giants' Causeway, I am not, at present, prepared to give a correct return of the 'community' of the whole of them; but I know a number of them so intimately, as to be able to caution your Lordship against the ecclesiastical arithmetic of this anonymous writer. Without dread of contradiction, I will venture to assert, that in the Remonstrant congregations of Newry, Banbridge, and Dromore alone, there is a 'community,' of more than 4,000. In the Remonstrant congregations of Dunmurry, Moneyrea, and Greyabbey, there is a 'community' of 4,000. In the Remonstrant congregations of Crumlin, Ballycarry, and Templepatrick, there is a 'community' of 4,000. In the first and second congregations of Belfast, and the congregation of Larne, of the Presbytery of Antrim, there is a 'community' of 4,000. Here is a 'community' of 16,000 in *only twelve* congregations, and there are several other congregations which approach to these in population. From what motive then, has A RESIDENT IN IRELAND endeavoured to persuade your Lordship that in the *forty* congregations in question there is a 'community' of but 4,000!! I call upon him to correct his errors, and, though comparisons are sometimes unpleasant, I challenge him to name *forty* Presbyterian societies in the General Synod, or out of it, which consist of a 'community' so respectable. These societies will not yield to any of their fellow-christians, of any Church, in the attainments of literature, in the practice of charity, and the promotion of peace and good will among men.

"But, my Lord, 'A Resident in Ireland' has not only diminished the 'community' of these three Synods into 4,000, but he has augmented the congregations of the General Synod into 250, though the number, as appears by the records of that Synod, is only 211. Is it fair to put such erroneous data before your Lordship and the public, by thus *under-rating* the Presbytery of Antrim, the Synod of Munster, and the Remonstrant Synod; and by thus *over-rating* the general Synod of Ulster? Besides, it is notorious that several ministers, and many laymen, of the General Synod of Ulster, entertain similar opinions to those churches in whose vindication I address your Lordship.

"And what are those opinions? Not 'Arian,' as 'A Resident in Ireland' would have your Lordship believe. The members of these three Synods, consisting

of a 'community' of between 30,000 and 40,000, are genuine Protestants, taking the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible, as their standard of faith and rule of duty; leaving each congregation to choose for itself a pastor of such religious views as the subscribers to its support may approve. That the majority of them are Unitarian Christians, they are proud to avow; that all of them acknowledge Jesus Christ as their only religious master, cannot be denied; and that none of them are the disciples of Arius, or any other uninspired leader, is asserted by

Your Lordship's very humble servant,

FLETCHER BLAKELY,

Presb. Minister of Moneyrea, near Belfast."

AN able and independent work, which is entitled *The Parliamentary Review*, and edited by J. S. Buckingham, Esq. Member of Parliament for Sheffield, contains much valuable information on a variety of topics. Some late numbers of the *Review* comprise letters, addressed to LORD GREY, *on the Religious and Moral Statistics of Ireland*. In one of them, a writer, who signs himself A RESIDENT IN IRELAND, professes, in the prosecution of his subject, to give details of the different religious denominations of the Island. In summing up the items of his statements, he brings into view the *community* of each denomination, and puts down figures with seeming confidence. He notices the Methodists, Quakers, Moravians, Independents, Covenanters, Seceders, General Synod of Ulster, Roman Catholics, and Protestants of the Established Church; and estimates the number of souls in each of these communions. He classes the Presbytery of Antrim, Synod of Munster, and Remonstrant Synod under one head, viz. *Arians*, and numbers the community of these three bodies at 4,000. Mr. Blakely, convinced of the great error of Mr. Buckingham's correspondent, published in *the Parliamentary Review* for the 31st of August, the above letter, which we now reprint, and which we leave to speak for itself;—aware that only a few of our readers have access to the *Review*.

EDITORS.

COMMENTARY ON PHILIPPIANS.

CHAPTER II. VERSE 6.

“Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.”

THE Apostle, in this chapter, is exhorting the church to *humility*, ver. 5, 6, “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.” The present is an incorrect translation of the original. Instead of the words, “thought it not robbery,” the proper signification is, *did not aspire* “to be equal with God.” Although Jesus Christ was in such an exalted capacity; though he was in the “*form of*,” or bore resemblance to the most perfect of all beings, *he did not aspire to an equality* with him; he was not ambitious of assuming his title or attributes, but on the contrary, in submission to his Father’s will, “he made himself of no reputation, and took upon himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he *humbled himself*, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

In the Trinitarian sense of the passage, however, Christ, instead of being an example of *humility*, is represented and held forth to us, as a person of the most ambitious character,—as thinking it “no robbery,” no unlawful infringement of the divine prerogative, in making himself “equal with God,” and in laying claim to all the honours of the Supreme Governor of the universe. Is this, I ask, placing the Redeemer before us in a fair light, or as a proper object of imitation? Is it doing justice to the character of our divine master—of him, who is called “the meek and the lowly,” who condescended even to “wash his disciples’ feet,” and in all his discourses and actions, manifested the most perfect submission to the will of his Father? No, it is an unjust reproach against the character of Christ, and places him before us in a point of view, which we cannot be inclined to look upon with admiration or respect.

But very different from the Trinitarian interpretation was the meaning of the Apostle. Christ, notwithstanding his exalted dignity as the “Son of God;” though in virtue of his office he might have appeared in all the trappings of earthly grandeur, seated on a throne, which would have outrivalled the magnificence of eastern monarchs, and before which surrounding nations

would have bowed in allegiance—he knew that such was unbecoming the object of his ministry, who came to teach the world humility, and to set at nought all the vanities of human pride and human ambition—to turn man from the empty and criminal contemplation of his own greatness, to an humble and reverential contemplation of the greatness and majesty of God, the centre of all excellence, and the source of all perfection.

But further, the passage, according to the Trinitarian construction, is entirely devoid of meaning. “Who being in the form of God,”—that is, according to them, who *being God*, “thought it not robbery” *to be God*. This is the acme of absurdity. If the Apostle had wished us to understand it according to their signification, may we not suppose, that he would have said at once—instead of “who being in the *form of*,” *who being strictly and truly God*. But the purport of his address shows, that he had no such intention; besides, as in that case, there would have been *no subject of comparison*, as God could not aspire to a greater, there would, consequently, have been *no object of imitation*, and the lesson of the Apostle would have been neutralized.

If Christ had been really and truly God, as Trinitarians assert, he could not have been to us *a pattern of obedience*, nor of any of those duties of homage, reverence, and resignation to the divine will, which exalt and adorn his character. If really God, he would have had no superior power, no higher authority to which he could have manifested deference and submission. It is contrary to reason to suppose, that the all-glorious and all-perfect Jehovah could be *humbled*—that the Deity could bow in submission to *himself*—that he could *divide himself*, so that one portion of his divine nature should become subservient to the other. No, he is so deep enshrined in his own mysterious and incomprehensible existence—he is so far removed, in his own unfathomable essence, beyond the possibility of change—he is so infinitely elevated, by his inherent and absolute perfection, above those acts of humility and reverence, which, when exercised towards him, are a virtue in inferior beings, that he could not sustain the least diminution or obscuration of his attributes, even so much as the blotting out of a single beam or ray of the glory and excellence which surrounds him. It was absolutely requisite then, to the proper fulfilment of his office, that Christ,

who came not only to be a teacher, but an *example* of every virtue, *should be inferior* to the Being whose will he was appointed to execute. Let it be observed, that humility, reverence, adoration, cannot be considered virtues, unless they proceed from the soul. Their true seat is in the heart. Adoration implies an impression on the *mind*, of unlimited greatness and majesty in the Being to whom it is directed. It supposes a deference of the *whole spiritual nature* to superior power and intelligence. Now, these virtues are recorded of Christ, and were conspicuous in his life. He worshipped his Father, he prayed to his Father, he submitted to the will of his Father—in a word, he fulfilled all righteousness, and performed every act of obedience, which we are called upon to observe towards our bountiful Creator. And we are bound to believe, that these were not merely *outward* or *external* marks of respect. His was not a partial reverence—it was not a superficial piety—it was not confined, as Trinitarians falsely suppose, to his “*human nature*,” in opposition to, and distinct from his “*divine* ;” but it was the full and entire obedience of Christ, in his most exalted capacity as the “Son of God.” It was the unreserved and unqualified homage of *one identical person*,—of his mind, his will, his understanding, of every feeling and sentiment of his soul, to the will of his Father. It was obedience of the highest and most perfect kind, proceeding, as it must, from a more intimate vision, and more lofty impressions of the infinite goodness and perfection of the Deity, than it is possible for us in this finite state to attain.

But these are duties and virtues which we cannot apply to God, nor suppose to be exercised by him. He is, by his very nature, possessed of every glorious attribute. We cannot ascribe the exercise of *piety* to *Him*, who is essentially holy and pure—nor of *humility*, who is himself the highest and most exalted of beings—nor of *patience*, because he is far removed beyond suffering or harm—nor of *reverence* or *prayer*, who is himself the object of all worship and adoration—nor of *submission to the will of another*, because He is the only being whom all are bound to obey, whose commands are absolute and supreme. Hence I infer, that Christ, in his highest character, *must have been* inferior and subordinate to God, otherwise he could not have been to us *an example of these virtues*.

Again, "being in the *form* of God," is no proof of an equality with God. The *form* and the *reality* are quite distinct things. Every man bears the *human form*. He has a resemblance to his fellow man, in countenance, in figure, in mental endowment. Yet we surely cannot say that they are all the *same individual*, that their bodies are of exactly similar proportions, or that they are possessed of minds of the same capacity and extended information. No, notwithstanding the resemblance is so close, that we at once recognise every individual of the human species as a member, or component part of the great family of mankind; each maintains his *individuality* and *personal identity*, as strictly as if he belonged to another grade of created beings. Nay more—*man* is said to be "created in the *image* of God." But who is so destitute of common understanding, as to suppose, that it is in his *outward form*? Who is there, that does not perceive at once, that it must be in regard to his mind, his reason, his immortality? In like manner, when Jesus Christ is said to be in the "*form of God*," "the image of the invisible God," "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person,"—what are these but exalted titles descriptive of the superior excellence and dignity of his character? From such expressions we cannot infer, that he is strictly and truly God,—but that he is the brightest and most perfect representation of the Divine Being, that could have been exhibited. Thus, John xiv. 9. Christ says, "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father"—not, that he, who had seen the "man Christ Jesus" *had actually seen God*,—not, that his outward bodily form, was a representation of the invisible Deity; as the same Evangelist declares, i. 18, "*No man hath seen God at any time*"—but that the purity and perfection of the Divine attributes, his goodness, his mercy, and love, were brought under our observation in a *visible aspect*, and displayed in the most illustrious manner, in his life and conversation. In the miracles which he performed, he demonstrated the power of God, and by his example, in which every grace and excellence were manifest, he brought before their inspection a living model of the Divine perfections. So pure and spotless was his life, so perfect his example, so exact the resemblance to the object of imitation, that he who had seen Christ, might be said, to have seen a *visible demonstration* of the power, wisdom, and goodness of the Father.

But the Apostle fully explains himself, and renders the passage so intelligible, that it is wonderful how even Trinitarians, with all their facility in distorting scripture, have the confidence to pervert his meaning; ver. 9, "Wherefore *God* also," for this act of condescension, "hath highly *exalted him*, and *given him* a name which is above every name:" ver. 11, "That every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, *to the glory of God the Father.*"

A more distinct asseveration of the exaltation of Christ by God, and of the glory being due to God as the supreme head, could not have been given. But how does the passage read according to the Trinitarian sense? Wherefore God, that is, the *Supreme God*, hath highly exalted *him*, that is, the *same Supreme God*, otherwise, hath highly exalted *himself*, and given himself a name that is above every name, that in the name of that *Supreme God*, every knee should bow, and every tongue confess, that *he is the Supreme God*, to the glory of God the Father, that is, to the glory of the *same Supreme God*! Such is a fair and faithful picture of the Trinitarian version of the passage, when dressed out in its most engaging colours! Let its advocates gaze upon its features, and admire its beauties, with whatever delight or satisfaction they can best command! But I should rather have said, such is the *incoherent jargon* to which it necessarily gives rise.

Besides the manifest inconsistency, of making *God exalt himself*, I ask, how is it possible, that *He could be exalted*, who is from all eternity possessed of the most absolute greatness, and highest possible perfection? The supposition is contrary to all reason and common sense, and to all just views of the Divine attributes, and can only find a place in the minds of those who are enslaved under the bondage of sectarian prejudice, and whose blind and dogged adherence to a mishapen and ill-constructed system, forms an impenetrable barrier, against which, every ray of divine light, and every beam of gospel truth is broken and diverged, before it reaches its proper destination.

J. C.

SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION.

[In compliance with the request of the Secretary of the under-named Sunday School Union, we have great pleasure in giving a place in our pages to the following Resolutions.—EDITORS.]

At a meeting of the Teachers of the Sunday-schools attached to the congregations in Worship Street, Coles Street, and Spicer Street, London, held at Coles Street, August 9th, 1833, the Rev. R. K. Philp in the Chair, the following resolutions were passed :—

I. That an Union be formed between the three Schools, the Teachers of which are now present.

II. That this Union be for the purpose of mutual information, encouragement, and assistance.

III. That for these purposes, a Quarterly meeting of the Teachers be held on the First Sundays in January, April, July, and October, at such place and hour as from time to time may be deemed convenient.

IV. That a Fund be formed by the Donations and Subscriptions from schools and individuals, for the purpose of publishing any works for use in Sunday-schools, which may seem to be called for, and for carrying into effect, in any way, the purposes of this Union.

V. That a Secretary and Treasurer be appointed to transact the business of the Union under the direction of the Quarterly meeting.

VI. That a Special general meeting be called by the Secretary, at the requisition of any two Teachers of the Schools connected with the Union.

VII. That a General meeting be held on some convenient day in the Summer of each year, when reports shall be read of the progress and prospects of each School connected with the Union, and also a General Report of the state of the Union.

VIII. That a Special Committee be appointed by the Quarterly or General meeting, to transact any business that may call for greater attention than ordinary.

IX. That, as the extension of this Union is highly desirable, other Schools be invited to join it.

X. That each School connected with the Union, shall contribute annually a sum of not less than Five Shillings.

XI. That Mr. William Newton Coupland, of 15, Globe Road, Mile End, be elected Secretary to this Union.

XII. That Mr. Robert Green, of 42, Whitechapel Road, be appointed Treasurer to this Union.

XIII. That the Secretary be requested to have copies of the resolutions now entered into, printed, and sent to the Editors of the different Unitarian periodicals.

XIV. That the cordial thanks of this meeting be given to Mr. Philp, for his able and impartial conduct in the Chair this evening, and for his general attention to the interests of Sunday-schools.

AN EXTRACT

From the Rev. Dr. Taylor's Defence of the common rights of Christians, first published nearly one hundred years ago.

SUCH are our regards to Revelation, that we dare not indulge ourselves in framing unscriptural suppositions, as the pretended orthodox do, who have upon this article forged no small number of the most wild and incoherent hypotheses, without any foundation in the Word of God or the nature of things. Having once forsaken the only rule of truth, they act over again the same folly with the old corrupters of natural religion, and “become vain in their imaginations.” Whereas we are content with what is plainly revealed, and dare neither add nor diminish from the fund of our own invention. *Such regard have we to Revelation*, that we found our explications of it, not upon the figments of our own heads, but upon the express authority of Jesus Christ, submitting our reason and understanding to be informed and enlightened by his divine instructions; not upon any forced sense of words, but upon the easy, natural, and obvious meaning of Scripture fairly compared with Scripture; so that any persons of common sense may plainly see the truth in its full and just light, would they but read, think, and judge without prejudice. Give me leave to propose one single instance. Granting that disputable text, 1 John v. 7, “There are three that bear record (or witness) in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one.” The question is, in what sense are *these three one*? It is in the Greek, *these three are* (ἐν) one thing. How *one thing*? As the argument here turns upon a Scripture mode of Speech, search the Scriptures, and you will find six other places, and no more, in the New Testament, where this manner of expression is applied to two or more persons, affirming that they are *one*, namely, Eph. ii. 14, 1 Cor. iii. 8, John xvii. 11, 21, 22.—x. 30. Carefully weigh and compare these places, and you will see the sense clearly and fully determined by Scripture-evidence. Let us begin with Eph. ii. 14,—ver. 11, “Wherefore remember, that ye being in times past Gentiles in the flesh,” &c.—ver. 12, “That at that time ye (Gentiles) were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel,” &c.—ver. 13, “But now

in Christ Jesus ye (Gentiles) who some time were afar off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ;”—ver. 14, “For he is our peace, who hath made both (*ἐν*) one.” What? in substance and essence? Do we Gentiles and the Jews, as many thousands of persons as we are, subsist but in one substance, &c.? Nothing can be more extravagant. But Christ “hath made both one,” as he hath laid the foundation of our union, by taking down the partition wall, which kept the Jews and Gentiles at a distance, and so hath made us one spiritual body or church, in the unity of faith, privileges, worship, &c. As it is in the next verse, 15, “making in himself of twain one new man;” and ver. 16, “reconciling both unto God in one body.” This, I think, can admit of no dispute.

Now turn to 1 Cor. iii. 8,—ver. 4, “For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?”—ver. 5, “Who then is Paul, or who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed?” &c. ver. 6, “I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.”—ver. 7, “So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.”—ver. 8, “Now he that planteth and he that watereth are (*ἐν*) one.” How? in substance or essence? As if these two men had but one substance, &c. in which both their persons subsisted? But one body, and one soul belonging to them both, in which both of them lived and acted? That’s impossible. How then were Paul and Apollos *one*? Evidently as they had the same commission from the same Lord, as they agreed in the same work, preached the same Gospel, for the same end. They two in their labours among the Corinthians were *all one*, in opposition to those who would have separated them, and made them heads of different sects, as if they differed in their doctrine. This will admit of no doubt.

Now take John xvii. 21.—ver. 20, “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also that shall believe on me through their word;”—ver. 21, “That they may all be (*ἐν*) one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be (*ἐν*) one in us.” What? one substance, or essence? Surely no: but *one*, as they are all united in Christ, and to one another, in the bond of faith, holiness, and charity; even as the Father and Son are united in truth, love, and mutual concurrence.

Another text is John x. 30.—ver. 27, “My sheep hear my voice,” &c.—ver. 28, “And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hands,” or frustrate the design of their salvation.—ver. 29, And were it possible my power should fail, “My Father, who gave them me, is greater than all; and none is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand.”—ver. 30, “I and my Father are (*ἐν*) one.” What? One substance or essence? So that the Father and the Son, though they are two different persons or intelligent agents, as much as Paul and Apollos, have, notwithstanding, but one individual substance or essence betwixt them, in which they subsist, live, and act? Learning misapplied by prejudice and prepossession will darken the clearest light. But this must appear absurd in the last degree to an unbiassed judgment. “I and my Father are one:” that is, my Father concurreth and acteth with me in the salvation of good men. “I came not of myself, but he sent me: I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me. I am not alone, because the Father is with me. He that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him. “I do nothing of myself:” John viii. 16, 28, 29, xvi. 32, *q. d.* ‘*I have a strict regard to, and faithfully execute his will, and he approveth what I do, and will assuredly stand by me in it, and will make good that eternal life, which I have promised to all who obey my doctrine.*’ This is plainly our Saviour’s argument. And this, Reader, is the solid and immutable foundation of our Christian faith and hope: here we may securely rest our souls and all our most valuable interests; being firmly persuaded, that the promise of eternal life, which Jesus, the faithful and true witness, hath given us, will be executed to the full. For by the Father’s commission he acted, and the Father’s power and goodness will concur with him in executing all the high and glorious designs of redemption. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again to a lively hope!” 1 Pet. i. 3.

Now, by comparing all these places together, it appears clearly enough, that when two or more persons are said to be *one*, the meaning is not in *substance* or *essence*, but in *affection*, *agreement*, *work*, or *design*. As Gen. xi. 6, “The Lord said, Behold, the people is one.”

—But is it thus to be applied to the persons in the Trinity?—Yes: for our blessed Lord himself hath given us this rule of interpretation with his own mouth, expressly, fully, certainly, clearly, without any difficulty or obscurity, in John xvii. 11. “Holy Father, keep through thy name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be (*ἐν*) one, as we are.”—ver. 21. “That they all may be (*ἐν*) one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they all may be (*ἐν*) one in us,” &c.—ver. 22. “And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them; that they may be (*ἐν*) one, even as we are (*ἐν*) one.” Which infallibly shows (if *he* be infallible, who is the way and the truth, and the life,) that the *Father* and the *Son* are *one* in the same sense as *Christians* are *one* with Christ, and with one another: not by a union or sameness of *substance* or *essence*, but of *affection*, *agreement*, and *design*. Here let him that readeth lay his hand upon his heart, and seriously consider whether he can reject this interpretation, without rejecting the doctrine and authority of Christ.

Thus the sense of this place is settled by solid proof of Scripture compared with Scripture.—This, Reader, I have given as a single specimen of that just regard we bear to Revelation, not only in this, but in all other religious controversies.

What the Scriptures reveal concerning the Son of God, we acknowledge and believe. We own him in all his offices, of prophet, priest, and king; as the one mediator between God and man, our advocate and intercessor, the surety of the better covenant, the captain and author of our salvation, the only name given under heaven among men by which we can be saved, and who can save to the uttermost. We believe all that he hath himself reported, whether by his own mouth, or by the mouth of his holy Apostles, concerning his person, nature, and perfections, his offices, and works. We take him just as he is described in Revelation: we change nothing of the Gospel; designedly and knowingly we add nothing, we diminish nothing, but leave every thing to stand just as it is in the Word of God.

CORRESPONDENTS.

Q. and CLASSICUS arrived too late for our present number.—Our esteemed and talented correspondent, Mr. Glendy, shall have space in our next for another letter.

THE
Bible Christian.

No. X.

NOVEMBER, 1833.

VOL. IV.

[FOR THE BIBLE CHRISTIAN.]

DEATH OF DAVID'S INFANT.*

THE character of David is strongly marked with blemishes and beauties, and has been made the foundation of much pernicious slander against religion. He was guilty of one great crime, which no good man can wish to extenuate; and distinguished by such amiable and respectable qualities as may defy the most industrious and injurious calumny. But whatever judgment we may form of his general character, we must agree, that almost every circumstance of his conduct is calculated to excite edifying reflections. Whether we desire to learn what we should practice, or what we should shun, we may find lessons on both subjects in the history of David. In the one case, we shall see the danger of indulging our more violent propensities, exemplified in the heinous sins into which they hurried a man of great abilities, amiable affections, and virtuous principles; and further illustrated by the severe displeasure of Almighty God. In the other view of the Royal Psalmist, we shall be struck with the beauty of holiness, and the manly exercise of almost every great and lovely virtue. We shall also discover what we may not at first expect to find in such an ardent and impatient mind, a high degree of self-command and resignation.

The gallantry, patriotism, and piety, displayed by David, while yet a stripling, in his encounter with Goliath, the gigantic champion of the Philistines, marked him out as no common character; but one from whom the greatest things might be expected. These qualities distinguished him throughout the whole of his life. As a poet, he stands pre-eminent among the crowd of poets; and in his peculiar department of poetry is unrivalled

* For David and Jonathan, see page 387.

and alone. His friendship for Jonathan, and generous forbearance towards Saul, his inveterate and implacable enemy, when he twice had him in his power: his pathetic lamentation for their death, and for the loss of his unworthy son Absalom, are striking indications of a noble, tender, and forgiving mind. There are other instances of the same kind, not so remarkable, or so generally noticed, which show, that these qualities were not called forth only on great occasions, but formed innate and essential parts of his character.

On the death of Saul, he was, by divine appointment, anointed king of Judah. But "Abner, captain of Saul's host, took Ishbosheth, the son of Saul, and made him king of Israel." This occasioned a civil war, in which David was victorious. Abner then quarrelled with Ishbosheth, and joined David. In the ordinary course of events, this overthrow of a pretender to the throne, would have been followed by deeds of cruelty and blood; but when Abner was treacherously slain by Joab, David mourned, and fasted, and pronounced a funeral oration over his remains; and when Ishbosheth also was basely murdered, and the murderers brought his head to David, in hope of a reward, David reminded them, how he had treated the Amalekite who boasted that he had slain Saul; and added, "How much more, when wicked men have slain a righteous person, in his own house upon his bed." And "David commanded his young men, and they slew them." Having found, upon inquiry, that Mephibosheth, a son of Jonathan, was living, who of course had hereditary pretensions to the throne, he sent for him, and said unto him, "fear not:" and he restored to him all the land of Saul, and all that pertained to him and all his house; and said, "Mephibosheth shall eat at my table, as one of the king's sons." He afterwards protected him from the treachery of his servants, and the enmity of the Gibeonites. There are other marks of a humane disposition in David, too numerous to mention at present, particularly his mercy to Shimei, and his gratitude to Barrillai, the aged Gileadite.

When David was offered a choice of famine, pestilence, or flying before the enemy, as a punishment for his sin, in numbering the people, he said, "I am in a great strait. Let us fall now into the hands of the Lord, for his mercies are great; and let me not fall into the hand of

man." But when he saw his subjects dying of the pestilence, he said unto the Lord, "Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly; but these sheep, what have they done?"

The Psalms lay open the whole of his character without reserve; the sublimity of his devotion and the profound humiliation of his repentance; his gratitude and confidence in God; his complaints and despondence; the ardor of his friendship; and we must add, the unbounded violence of his enmity and resentment. Among the rest, we meet alternately with very inconsistent states of mind, particularly impatience under affliction, and calm resignation under the Divine dispensations. These last qualities are conspicuous in his behaviour on the death of the infant child of Bathsheba.

The murder of Uriah, perpetrated in consequence of David's express desire, and in order to secure his possession of Bathsheba, whom he had seduced, exposed the king to the wrath of him, who is higher than the highest; and the displeasure of God was at the same time announced and vindicated by Nathan's parable of the Ewe Lamb. This was followed by a pointed rebuke, in which David was reminded of the wonderful prosperity, with which he had been blessed, the many instances of divine interposition which he had experienced, and the continued and increasing kindness of Almighty God. This remonstrance introduced a sentence of punishment by domestic calamity, which was immediately commenced by the untimely death of the child of Bathsheba, and afterwards completed by the complicated incest and rebellion, and the tragical end of Absalom, his favourite son.

The prophet foreseeing the ill use that would be made of the sin that David had committed, and which has indeed been made of it, even in our own days, said to the king, "because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child that is born unto thee shall surely die. And Nathan departed unto his own house, and the Lord struck the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David, and it was very sick." David immediately acknowledged the hand of God: he besought God for the child, and fasted, and lay all night on the earth:" and though the elders of his house, or the principal nobles of his court "rose and went in to him, to raise him up from

the earth, he would not, neither did he eat bread with them." Thus he continued to express his contrition, and his fears, for the space of seven days, at the expiration of which time the child died; and the servants feared to tell him that the child was dead; for they said, "Behold while the child was yet alive, we spake unto him, and he would not hearken unto our voice; how will he then vex himself if we tell him that the child is dead? But when David saw that his servants whispered, he perceived that the child was dead. Therefore David said unto his servants, is the child dead? And they said, he is dead. Then David arose from the earth, and washed and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the Lord, and worshipped: then he came to his own house, and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat.

The first circumstance worthy of notice in this narrative is, that no sooner was the child taken ill, than David recognised this as an interposition of heaven for the punishment of his sins. This should remind us of the propriety of making the same reflection on every such occurrence in our own lives. 'Tis true, that David was expressly forewarned of this misfortune, and apprized of the reason for which it befell him. But have not we also the best reason to suppose, that domestic calamities are often inflicted on similar accounts? A religious and considerate mind will find reason to believe, that such events are regulated by the immediate hand of God, more frequently than the generality of men are willing to acknowledge. And perhaps we may be assisted in ascertaining the particular fault, for which we are corrected by adverting to the nature of the correction. David's sin was a violent infringement of the peace of a family. It produced not only dishonour and ruin in a family of his subjects, whom he was bound by his station to protect and defend from the violence of others; but terminated in the murder of an innocent and very faithful servant. Accordingly the prophet denounced, and the Lord executed upon David a sentence of confusion, disloyalty, rebellion and death, upon his own family. And if we compare the complexion and features of his offence with that of his punishment, we shall see a studied resemblance. I dont say that this likeness between our sins, and our punishment will always, or even fre-

quently, be observable : nor will I venture to say, that divine wisdom will always observe this rule ; much less, that it ought to do so. But I throw this out, as a circumstance well worthy of our attention on such occasions. And we are guilty of sin in so many branches of our commerce with the world, that I dare say, such a similitude will be found in most cases, even, perhaps, where it was not intended. Thus, when God is pleased to deprive fond parents of a favourite child ; let them reflect, whether they had not formed too strong an attachment to it, and suffered their affections to be estranged from God, or their minds to be weakened and enervated by an undue indulgence of parental love ; or whether they were educating their offspring in a manner likely to make him a good christian, and an useful member of society. Let the man who has been unsuccessful in his worldly business reflect, whether he at all times conducted himself with probity and charity to man, and humility to God, in his season of prosperity ; and whether he invited the poor to partake of the table, which had been so plentifully spread for himself. Let those who are afflicted with any distemper, call to mind, that they did not always make a wise and innocent use of the blessing of health. I do not wish, however, to countenance the practice of inferring the favour or displeasure of God from the prosperity of ourselves or our neighbours. This is expressly forbidden in the case of the murder of the Galileans and the fall of the tower of Siloam. “Time and chance happen to all men :” and, in the course of Providence, “there be just men, to whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked ; and there be wicked men, to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous ;” and oftentimes, “there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked, to the good and to the clean and to the unclean.” What serves one man may injure another. God, therefore, “sends his rain on the evil and the good promiscuously, and causeth his sun to shine on the just and on the unjust without distinction.” Besides, we should judge of others, as we wish them to judge of us. If we conclude our unfortunate neighbour to be a reprobate, we must allow him to judge so of us in our afflictions. If we flatter ourselves, that we are favourites of heaven, we must acknowledge our neighbour’s good fortune to be a proof

of his superior merit. Keep such reflections for your own use, according to our Lord's application of the subject: "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

The next particular in the behaviour of David is, that although he seemed to have forgotten his crime, with the most heedless thoughtlessness, yet as soon as he felt the divine displeasure, he recollected and confessed it with the deepest affliction of mind. Nor did he, out of pride, or any other principle, endeavour to conceal his humiliation. He was not ashamed to let his whole court see, with what contrition he confessed his sins, with what abasement he humbled himself before Almighty God. By his confession he acknowledged the justice of God; by the bitterness of his sorrowful repentance, he manifested his sense of his mercy; and by his public demonstration of humility and contrition, he set an edifying example of piety to his people.

Another circumstance in this story, that deserves our notice, is the demeanour of David, after the death of his child. His servants, who had been witnesses to the extreme bitterness and long continuance of his affliction, trembled for the consequence of communicating this fatal event to one of such violent passions; for thus they reasoned: "Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spake unto him, and he would not hearken unto our voice: how will he then vex himself, if we tell him, that the child is dead?" This conjecture was justified by their general experience; but it was not true with respect to David. His lamentations had not proceeded from childish weakness. They were the effect of sorrow for his sins; and desire of exciting the compassion of an offended God. The behaviour of David was accordingly very different from their expectations: for, when he understood that the infant was dead, "he arose from the earth, and washed and anointed himself, and changed his apparel." At first sight this might appear to have been a sullen and contemptuous insult to God, who had rejected his prayers. But what follows shews, that it proceeded from a manly strength of mind, and religious resignation. For before he tasted food, or even returned into his own house, he "came into the house of the Lord and worshipped." This deserves particular attention; because it is so manifestly praiseworthy, yet so generally neglected. It is strange, that men should absent themselves from religious services,

at the very time when devotion is so congenial to the feelings of their souls, and when they are most in want of what Religion is peculiarly calculated to confer, support and consolation. We should, as soon as possible, acquire a placid and composed acquiescence in the will of God: and then both cherish and demonstrate this laudable temper of mind, by "coming to the house of the Lord and worshipping him." The neglect of this Duty can proceed only from one of three causes, a deficiency of religious sentiment and resigned acquiescence in the divine will—an unwarrantable dejection of mind, and obstinacy in grief, or an affectation of that degree of sorrow, which is unjustifiable in itself, and the affectation of which must of course be contemptible.

The servants of David seem to have been insensible to the propriety of his conduct: for they said unto him, "What thing is this, that thou hast done? Thou didst fast and weep for the child, whilst it was alive; but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread." David justified himself by these words: "While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious unto me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him; but he shall not return to me." In the former part of this passage, he vindicates his grief on religious principles; in the latter he justifies his composure on philosophical suggestions. The former have been already adverted to. The philosophy of the latter part, though it expresses a truth, does not seem calculated to remove grief. It gives indeed a sufficient reason for the composure of David; and of every one, who has sufficient strength of mind to make use of it. But it rather tends to demonstrate the inefficacy of tears, (of which every one is abundantly convinced) than to dry up their source.

"I shall go to him" is a consideration which, though sufficiently obvious, comes peculiarly recommended in circumstances similar to those of David. If it be taken as implying only the certainty of death, it is still a thought, which should never pass over our minds, without confirming some virtuous impression. But if it be understood as intimating a hope of re-union hereafter, it is neither warranted nor discouraged by Scripture. God alone can judge, whether such an event would con-

duce to our perfection, or be compatible with our happiness. But as the expectation of it can scarcely produce any injurious effect, and is certainly a source of the purer pleasures of imagination, he has graciously left us "that Hope" to be our comfort here."

Perhaps the composure of David's mind was the sooner restored by this consideration, that as part of his punishment was past, the anger of God might be in some measure appeased: and the prospect of a restoration of divine favours might reconcile him to those afflictions, by which it was to be obtained. This conjecture is confirmed by the behaviour of David on other occasions: for he had cause for lamentation on the death of three other persons of very different characters. Jonathan was his dearest and most faithful friend; and Saul his Father was the most inveterate and inexorable of David's enemies: the death of these he had to lament on the same day; and he mourned for both with a profusion of sorrow; such as indicated the tenderest and most generous affections; but certainly not that firmness and tranquillity of mind, which he manifested on the present occasion. These incidents, however, he had no reason to consider, as the consequence of God's displeasure. The last occasion that called forth the lamentation of David, was the death of his son Absalom. He was one of the most unprincipled persons, whose characters are described in Holy Writ. He was at the same time undutiful to his Father and disloyal to his king: he attempted to perpetrate the crimes of treason and parricide, by the same act, and the violence of his lawless passions confounded every distinction, which nature and custom have established among the members of the same family, by such crimes as are shocking even to the most dissolute and abandoned. Yet for him, though slain in rebellion against himself, so strong is the influence of natural affection, David mourned with the bitterest anguish, and the most unseasonable lamentation. So that Joab was obliged to rebuke him. "Thou hast declared (said he) this day, that thou regardest neither Princes nor servants: for I perceive, that if Absalom had lived, and all we had died; then it had pleased thee well."

Such was the manner in which David behaved on four several occasions. It is not necessary either to prove his consistency, or to vindicate and account for the irregularity of his conduct. The incident under consi-

deration is more worthy in be recalled to your minds, as laudable to itself, and pregnant with more valuable hints. It is desirable that we should frequently view, and learn to behold with a steady eye, those circumstances of distress, to which we are all exposed; and consider how we may meet, with the composure of a rational, and the resignation of a religious being, those calamities, which we cannot hope to escape.

ERASMUS.

COMMENTARY ON ROMANS. :

CHAP. IX. VERSE 5.

“Whose are the Father's, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever.”

A MORE approved rendering of this passage is: “Whose are the Father's, and of whom is the Christ, according to the flesh, *God being over all blessed for ever.*” This version, is not only more authoritative and worthy our reception, as being the correct and literal translation of the original Greek, but as more agreeable to the general strain of the sacred writers, who are consistent throughout, in ascribing *undivided glory and praise* to the Almighty Jehovah. The text, however, in its ordinary construction, is perfectly *Unitarian*, and in accordance with the great doctrine of the Bible, that *God is one*, and that he is possessed of sovereign and universal dominion over his creatures. Trinitarians understand the words, “God blessed for ever,” as relating to Christ. I understand them in a sense directly opposite: as referring *peculiarly and purposely* to God; and indicating that all glory is due to him as the supreme governor and head.

The Apostle is speaking of the *natural descent* of Christ from the Israelites. Now, to affirm that God came into the world by *natural descent*,—that he came “according to the flesh;” to attach any idea the most distant, of *birth, humanity, or lineal procession* to him, who is the eternal, unchangeable, and infinite spirit, is alike obnoxious to our feelings, and repulsive to our understanding. The Apostle after summing up, verse 4 and 5, “Who are the Israelites; to whom *pertaineth* the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of *God*, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concern-

ing the flesh, *Christ came*,—after making this statement, with that expression of piety and reverence towards the Almighty God, the God of the Israelites, the God of his fathers, the God of his worship, the God who sent his son Jesus Christ into the world to be the Saviour of mankind, which is conspicuous throughout the whole of his writings,—concludes with a kind of doxology, or ascription of praise to him who had chosen them to be a peculiar people, and to whom he had entrusted such important privileges.

The proper distinction to be observed, then, in reading the passage according to its present construction, is,—“Of whom, as concerning the flesh, *Christ came*, who is over all—*God* (who is supreme) *be blessed for ever*.” Christ “who is over all,” that is, who is invested with all spiritual authority; “thrones, and dominions, and principalities *being made* subject unto him,” over which his kingdom shall yet rise triumphant. Christ is over us at present: he is our shepherd, the head of his church, the captain of our salvation, our master, our guide. As in Acts ii. 36, “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that *God hath made* that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both *Lord* and Christ.” Eph. i. 22, “And hath *put* all things under his feet, and *gave him* to be *head over all things unto the Church*.” Also, 1 Cor. xv. 24—28. “Then cometh the end when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to *God, even the Father*; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For *he hath put* all things under his feet. But when he saith, *all things* are put under him, it is manifest *He* is excepted which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the *Son also himself* be subject unto him, that put all things under him, *that God may be all in all*.” The Apostle has here combated the doctrine of “Christ’s equality with God,” in a strain of language the most energetic and conclusive. It would almost seem, from the minute and specific line of distinction, which he has drawn between the *subordination* of the “*Son*,” and the *supremacy* of the *Father*, that he beheld in the distance, that the doctrine of a “Trinity” would find its way into the church, to deteriorate the fair and beautiful system of Christianity; that he foresaw the

unhappy train of evils attendant on its introduction, the persecution to which it should give rise, and the rancour, hatred, and animosity, which it would engender among the different ranks of professing Christians; and that he had applied the powerful and commanding force of his reasoning, to prevent the possibility of its existence. But it is to be lamented, that through the ambitious policy and designing priest-craft of man, the object of his instructions has been, in a great measure, defeated; that during a degenerate and superstitious age, this anti-christian heresy, this libel on revelation, met the solemn sanction and approval of an ecclesiastic council, and through the arbitrary sway of tyrannical power, was allowed to assume a standing and a name deeply detrimental to the progress of "pure and undefiled religion."

The Apostle teaches us, that Christ is over all, *God excepted, blessed for ever*. His supreme authority, as the source and fountain from whom every good and perfect gift proceeds, and in whom all wise and gracious dispensations will finally terminate, still to be acknowledged; his absolute and undisputed sovereignty ever to be recognised; his superior claims to our reverence and love, always to be regarded; his name ever to be adored and blessed. As in 1 Cor. xi. 3. "*The head of every man is Christ; and the head of Christ is God.*" Eph. iv. 5, 6. "*One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*" Rom. xvi. 27, "*To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever.*" We never read such scripture declarations but we are confirmed more and more in our *Unitarian* principles. Such passages should be printed in *Large Capitals*, in every copy of the Bible, that they might serve as beacon lights to guide the ignorant and the credulous in their benighted wanderings, and reckless aberrations from the worship of "the living and the true God;" or as polar stars, by which they might be preserved from the shipwreck of a sound and rational faith, when they are in danger of being led astray by false guides and spiritual instructors, to forsake the clear and steady light of divine truth, for the deceptive mockery of human creeds and doctrines, the fabrication of dishonest and self-interested theologians.

But let us "reason a little with these philosophers." If Christ was God over all, then it follows, that he was

both "*God and Father*," and yet "*Son*" to *himself*; that *he sent himself* into the world; that he *worshipped himself*; that he *prayed to himself*; that he suffered upon the cross "*to satisfy his own justice*," according to their sublime creed; that he *ascended to himself*, after his resurrection; that he was, at the same time, *eternal and self-existent*, yet *created*; that he was *omniscient*, yet *ignorant*; that he was *omnipotent*, yet "*could do nothing of himself*;" that he was a *part*, yet a *whole*; that he was the "*first person*" in the "*Trinity*," yet the "*second*;" the "*second*," yet the "*first*;" and not this alone, but the "*first, second, and third persons*," at one and the same time!

It would follow, also, on this principle, that every thing that is recorded in scripture respecting Christ, has a like reference to the Almighty—that the eternal, unchangeable, and infinite Jehovah, was *born* of one of *his own creatures*; that he "*was laid in a manger*;" that Mary his *mother*, the (*mother of God*!) took him and fled with him before the face of Herod; that he *grew in stature*, and *in favour with man and himself*; that he became subject to all the infirmities of our nature; that he was *hungry* and *thirsty*; that he was *wearied* and *fell asleep*; that he was *grieved*; that he *groaned in spirit*; that he was dragged before the tribunal of Pontius Pilate as a *malefactor*; that he was *insulted* and *mocked* by a Jewish rabble; that he, before whose throne all must stand accountable, was *condemned as a criminal*; that he was *nailed to a tree*; that he was *crucified*; that he *gave up the ghost*, or *literally expired*! Frightful and revolting as this is, I could place the doctrine of Trinitarians, in a far more repulsive aspect, only the respect for the feelings of my readers, forbids me using epithets and constructions, which their doctrine would warrant. I may observe, however, generally, that there is contradiction after contradiction, and irrationality after irrationality, vying each other in magnitude, consequent on the Trinitarian hypothesis; rising up in fearful array, till our very soul is shocked, and our mind overwhelmed with still increasing wonder and astonishment, that men possessed of reason and the power of reflection, and with all professing the most solemn reverence for the name of the Most High, can suffer themselves to be so far blind-

folded by their prejudices, as to be the open and boasted defenders of a doctrine, fraught with such obvious errors !

Christ says, without qualification or reserve, John xiv. 28, *My Father is greater than I,*" which assertion, if it regarded merely his "*human nature,*" amounted to nothing. It was ascribing no extraordinary work of distinction or pre-eminence to the Almighty, to affirm, that he was greater, or wiser, or more powerful than Christ, as a *mere man*. It was granting but little to the honour and majesty of Him who ruleth in the Heavens, if he meant to signify, that He was only *greater* than the frail and perishable materials of Christ's *mortal frame*, which was liable to suffering, and external injury, and death ;—or that he was even *greater* than the "*human soul and body combined,*" by which he was constituted what Trinitarians call "*perfect man.*" Such an interpretation of his words, speaks but sparingly for Christ's reverence for the glory and majesty of that God, by whom he was appointed and sent, by whom he lived, whose doctrines he taught, whom he enjoined his disciples to worship, whose will he executed, by whose aid and power he performed extraordinary miracles, and on whom he professed entire dependence for every thing connected with his divine mission. But there is not a single doubt, that Christ avowed *the supremacy of his Father*, and *his own subordination* in a more extended sense : that he spoke of himself as *one distinct person* ; and that his words are to be taken without restriction or modification, as applying to him in his whole and perfect character, as the "*mediator between God and men.*" If he had been possessed of *another* and a *higher nature*, which constituted him "*perfect God,*" he might, in the very same breath that he made the declaration, "*My Father is greater than I,*" have directly contradicted himself by affirming, "*My Father is not greater than I,*" but *I am as great as my Father* : I am, by virtue of my divine nature, *myself the Omnipotent God*. But where, throughout the whole of the New Testament, do we read of Christ laying claim to such authority ? Not in a single instance. On the contrary, do we not find him uniformly expressing the most profound reverence and submission to the Fa-

ther, and on all occasions in the strongest manner, and with the most sacred regard, vindicating his sole and superior right to our worship and adoration?

There is not a doubt, if he had practised such deception as Trinitarians seem to impute to him; if he *had been even capable of assuming two different characters*, which he could have put on and off at pleasure, that he would at the very outset have been condemned as an impostor, and even his own disciples would have deserted him. But it was the uniformity and consistency of his character—the perfect candour and openness of all his words and actions—the impossibility of his being chargeable with the least dissimulation or hypocrisy—the unostentatious dignity and sincerity of the whole of his conduct, which enabled him to combat so long the indignant pride, and malicious prejudices of a hardened and unbelieving people. It is true, the Jews at last put him to death: but it was not on the accusation of *asserting his right to Deity*, but merely because “he called himself the *Son of God*.” It was because they were disappointed in their ambitious views; because their visionary dreams of earthly grandeur were blasted; because the jealousies of their rulers were awakened, and because he came to establish a spiritual kingdom, on the ruin of their temporal hopes and prospects.

I have been induced, merely to advert, at present, to the tenet of Christ’s “two natures”—as this is the subterfuge, to which Trinitarians invariably resort, for the purpose of evading some of the most convincing arguments, and important texts of Scripture, which stand as living witnesses against the truth of their favourite doctrine. I shall, on some future occasion, give it a fuller investigation, and endeavour to prove, that it is nothing but a “false creation of their own brain,” entirely unfounded in reason and scripture.

It may be further observed, in relation to the text, that the word “*blessed*” is generally applied in Scripture, as the peculiar title of *God the Father*: as in Ps. lxxxix. 52, “*Blessed be the Lord for ever more.*” Romans i. 25, “Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, *who is blessed for ever.*” 2 Cor. i. 3, “*Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*” And again, at the xi. 31, “*The God and Father of our*

Lord Jesus Christ, *which is blessed* for ever more, knoweth that I lie not." Eph. i. 3, "*Blessed be the God and Father* of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." In 1 Tim. vi. 15, God is distinguished, as the "*blessed and only potentate*, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords." But in Christ's examination before the High Priest, the application of this title to the "Father," is perhaps more exactly defined than in any other portion of Scripture: as recorded, Mark xiv. 61, "Again the High Priest asked him, and said unto him, art thou the Christ, *the son of the Blessed?*" Here the distinction is so clearly specified, that there can be no possibility of mistake. Christ is not styled "the blessed," but merely the "*Son of the blessed:*" which shows, that the High Priest entertained the most rigid regard for the supreme glory and honour of God, and was not by any means impressed with the idea, that Christ was "*equal with God*," or that he was addressing the Great Being who was the object of his worship. We are given to understand also, from Christ's answer in the affirmative, that he recognised the correctness of the title, v. 62, "And Jesus said, *I am.*"

Whether, then, I consider the harmony of Scripture, the different readings of the original text, or the authority of the best critics, I am led to infer, that the words "*God blessed for ever*," in the passage which we have reviewed, apply *solely and exclusively* to *God the Father*, and not to Jesus Christ, who is uniformly represented in Scripture, under the title of the "*Son*," the "*Messiah*," or "*sent*" of God. J. C.



PRIVATE BAPTISM AND PRIVATE COMMUNION.

THESE ordinances correspond with the initiatory and commemorative rites of the Jewish law. Circumcision was imposed on the eighth day after birth, on the sons of natural born Jews; it was also imposed on proselytes and their families; for in those times and countries a man was always identified with his family. Otherwise the father would be a Jew, and his sons would be heathens. This ceremony was always accompanied with purification by water, and was a domestic ordinance performed by members of the family.

In like manner, Baptism has been always administered to children in the Christian church from the times of the Apostles soon after birth. It was also administered to adult converts and their children. In all these cases it was celebrated in private as a domestic ordinance. That this was the case in the time of the Apostles appears from the baptism of Cornelius, Stephanus, Lydia, and the Jailer, with their families in their own houses. Thus too was Paul baptized by Ananias. There are other instances of baptism, but they are not connected with my subject. The baptism of John was antecedent to the ministry of Christ; that of the Ethiopian courtier, Simon Magus and others, and the baptism of three thousand at Pentecost, were either not public, or at least not congregational. It is probable that Crispus, Gaius and others were baptized in the house of Justus. Acts viii. 8.

Hence it appears, that Baptism was calculated for the bosom of a private family; yet it has been usual in many churches to celebrate it in the face of the congregation, or at least within the walls of the church. If this be done by the desire or wish of the parents, no person has any right to object; but otherwise it is not only a deviation from the original practice, but an infringement of Christian liberty. It may be said that it is more convenient for the minister to have the children brought to his own house, or to the church, and that through age or infirmity, he may not be able to attend on so many private families, and that in many large and populous parishes such an attendance would be hardly practicable. On the other hand, if this usage be convenient to the minister, it is inconvenient to his people. If such an attendance would endanger his health, the contrary practice exposes the mothers and their infants to imminent risk, especially when living at a distance and in the winter season. Besides it interferes with those ministerial visits which are peculiarly acceptable on these interesting occasions, and with those social meetings of relatives and intimate friends which have a powerful influence in cementing family connections.

As to the Lord's Supper, though it had a private origin, it was evidently intended to be celebrated in public. This appears from several considerations, and particularly from the example of St. Paul. Though he was not present at the institution, nor even one of the

twelve to whom some would confine the command of our lord; yet he authoritatively enjoined and regulated the observance of it in the church of Corinth. It was instituted immediately after the Paschal Supper before they left the table, and as Matt. expresses it, "while they were eating."

Agreeably to this, it was often immediately preceded among the primitive Christians by an entertainment called a love feast, to which every person brought his own mess. To this part of the entertainment St. Paul alludes when he rebukes the Corinthians for the profanation of the communion; for, it was impossible that gluttony and drunkenness should have taken place in tasting bread and wine in remembrance of their master. Though, however, it is unquestionably a congregational ordinance, it is my purpose, in the remainder of this paper to show that it is agreeable to its nature and intention to administer it in private.

The Passover and the Lord's Supper are corresponding rites, calculated both to attest the truth of the two dispensations respectively, and to make pious and virtuous impressions on the hearts of those, who partake of them. They were both of a domestic nature in their original institution. "Take a Lamb for a house;" "in one house it shall be eaten," was the direction for the Passover. It was after the celebration of the Paschal Supper, that our Lord instituted, in its room, the Holy Communion; and in the same company, consisting of the Apostles, who were his household, and immediate attendants. He gave no directions concerning the number, that should assist at it. It is therefore evident, that it is not contrary to the original institution to partake of it in private. After his ascension, the Lord's Supper made a part of the ordinary service of the disciples; and as they assembled in private houses, and upper rooms, few could be present, except the inhabitants of the house, or members of the family. Thus "they broke bread from house to house." The same custom continued in the primitive church, in which the Eucharist was commonly administered to the sick.

The reasons why this practice has gone so much out of use among Presbyterians and other Dissenters, are an opinion, that it is contrary to the intent of the ordinance, to celebrate it, except in places of public worship; and the abuse of this ceremony in other churches.

But there were no regular congregations among the first Disciples ; and therefore it could not be administered to such numbers at once as now partake of it ; and its having been perverted to superstitious purposes by others is no reason, why persons of rational piety should be debarred from it.

It was ordained to be a memorial of the ministry and death of our Lord. "This do in remembrance of me." "Drink ye all of it, in remembrance of me." It should therefore be partaken of by all who are expected to remember Christ. The observance of this rite was required as a duty from all his disciples, and should therefore be observed by them all, wherever they may be. It is appointed for consolation and support of his followers, under trials, afflictions and temptations ; and therefore all who are subject to such visitations are entitled to its support and consolations. It is calculated to strengthen our faith ; and should therefore be complied with by all who "desire increase of faith in Christ," and additional strength to their confidence in God.

Now none of these ends could be effectually accomplished, were those deprived of it, who are prevented from attending public worship ; and yet none require it more. How large a portion of the whole Christian community are unavoidably secluded from joining any numerous body of disciples ! how many reside in heathen or superstitious countries ; how many are travelling by land and water ; what numbers are employed in war or commerce by sea and land ! what multitudes are confined in hospitals and prisons ! Even in the neighbourhood of Christian churches, in the very bosom of religious societies and families, how many are debarred from this privilege by sickness, or chronical infirmities ! and that for a great part of their lives ! Who will say, that devout persons, in these circumstances, may not partake of the most solemn and important office of their religion in private ? It is indeed, manifestly calculated to be a *social* ordinance, and a token of union, fellowship and brotherly love among those who communicate ; but as to number there is no limitation ; although it is, for the same reason desirable, that the company should be as numerous, as may conveniently be.

Private Communion has, no doubt, been grossly and deplorably abused ; and that in a greater or less degree, by almost every denomination of Christians, till it has

come to be esteemed a certain passport to heaven, by a mechanical process, without any co-operation on the part of the communicant. This makes it peculiarly and indispensably necessary for the minister to guard against such a superstitious perversion of the ordinance. But even in a public congregation, is the minister not often called upon to combat such prejudices? is not the ordinance exposed to the same abuse? are not the people liable to the same delusions? Perhaps, on the other hand, the sacrament is sometimes received in private with deeper humiliation, with a more sympathetic affection, with a more lively and exalted devotion than in a public assembly; though in general those sentiments may be excited in a higher degree by a more public ministration.

I am not recommending this practice; I am only vindicating the minister and the communicant, who resort to it on suitable occasions, with due precautions, and with a reference to the general character and conduct of the communicant, while in health and at liberty to attend the house of God. If these have been immoral, profane, or even inconsiderate, there is great reason to suspect the foundation of his apparent sincerity and piety when confined to the bed of languishing, and it becomes the minister of the gospel to be peculiarly vigilant, suspicious, and rigorous in his exhortations and examinations in suspected cases; but after all, he cannot presume to condemn, though he may search the heart. This may acquit the minister: but it most of all behoves the penitent to beware of self-delusion; and this is so difficult, that it is a perilous experiment to defer any of our religious duties, whether instrumental or sentimental, to the approach of death. When these are regularly performed throughout the course of our lives, the occasions on which private communion may be resorted to, are very rare.

We should carefully avoid indolence and procrastination; and while in the enjoyment of health and faculties, so to attend on the public administration of this ordinance, as never to have reason to regret any omissions, when oppressed with age or infirmities, either of body or mind. We shall then feel no temptation to resort to superstitious expedients to supply the deficiencies of our religious course; but shall feel a conscious satisfaction that we have studied to fulfil all righteousness, and in

godly sincerity have had our conversation both with God and man: or when precluded from appearing in the house of the Lord, and joining in the communion of saints, we may, with a pure heart, and an enlightened conscience, apply the consolations of this rite as balm to our afflicted souls.

Finally, it is plain, that whatever efficacy may be ascribed to these ordinances by any denomination of Christians, it cannot depend on the mode or place of their administration. Mankind are too much inclined to consider Christianity as a religion of punctilios in doctrine and forms, instead of holy dispositions and kind affections. And to confine to churches and sects, ordinances that are calculated and intended for all mankind, in all circumstances, and in every place.

NEMO.

COME AND SEE:'

Or the duty of Judging before Condemning.

To have prejudice is not a crime, it is an infirmity; but to allow ourselves to be governed by prejudice in our actions, judgments, and feelings to others, is no better than a sin. When Nathaniel asked, with surprise, if it was possible that any good thing should proceed from Nazareth, Philip said, 'Come and see.' Now, if he had refused to take the proper means to satisfy his own mind upon the subject, he would have done perpetual injustice to Him who was holy, harmless, and undefiled, and would have lost himself a privilege, which he would not afterwards have surrendered for worlds. He acted like a man who wished, not to indulge his prejudice, but to know the truth, whatever it might be; and as soon as he went and saw, he was convinced that his prejudices were unfounded and unworthy. It would not, however, be possible to give the name of good to one who stands out in his prejudices; for every one is bound to keep his mind always open to light, argument, and conviction; he is bound to prove all things; for till he has done so, he has no security that he is holding fast what is good.

Let us apply the words of Philip to the faith which Unitarians profess. Though the public feeling is mild-

er than it was, that faith is still spoken against: some regard it with anger and scorn, others with dislike and dread. Now it seems to us to be the duty of those who have such feelings, to ascertain whether there be reason or not to indulge them. How do they know what our opinions are! They ought at least to know what they condemn. Let them 'come and see' whether we exalt human reason above revelation—whether we degrade and dishonour the Son of God—whether we make light of human sin—whether we teach that man's works alone will save him—whether we remove all the fears of future retribution. If they come and see that it is so, then let them bear testimony against us, and they may do it with a good conscience; but if they condemn without a hearing, if they judge our sentiments from the unfriendly representations of others, when they can learn what they are from the best authority, they take a course which it is not easy to reconcile with a right sense of duty.

But some one may tell us that *we* speak of the sentiments of other sects, and ask us how we are acquainted with them? We answer that we hear them preached, and advise others to go at times to hear them. If any one is not edified by our preaching, we advise him to go where he can find more acceptable instructions. Moreover, we can learn their sentiments from their creeds and confessions; but we have no creed except the Scriptures, and they cannot learn what construction we put upon the Scriptures, except from ourselves. It is true, they might learn from our writings; but there is the same aversion to reading our writings, as to hearing our preachers; so that many unfortunately cut themselves off from every opportunity of ever knowing what we believe and profess; and thus, we sometimes find, that those who think they are condemning our sentiments, are condemning sentiments which *we* do not believe any more than *they*; so that we find it necessary to say to them, 'come and see' what those sentiments are, which you condemn as false, and ruinous to the soul.

They say that we exalt human reason above the revelation of God. Come and see if it be so. We use our reason to discover what is taught in the Scriptures. There are parts of those writings which require attention and study to learn their meaning; and in making

that inquiry, we use our reason—in other words, we use our minds, not to judge truths which we find taught, but simply to learn what *is* taught by the inspiration of God. Every other sect with which we are acquainted, does precisely the same thing; every sect has its volumes of interpretation, its aids to the right understanding of the scriptures, and invites its followers to use their reason—to examine, compare, and judge—to deliberate long and carefully, in order to ascertain the meaning of the oracles of God. So far, no one can say, that we forget the right province of human reason, or exalt its authority too high. But if they say, that we ever set the conclusions of our reason against the authority of revelation, or to use the common phrase, set reason above revelation, let them come and see. It is a serious charge, and before they bring it against us, they ought to be sure that it is true. If they come, they will see that we treat the authority of revelation as final and supreme. We bring every doctrine and every duty to the test of scripture; the reason of our rejecting certain doctrines, is, that we cannot find them taught in the Bible; if we did, we should embrace and avow them, as readily as we now disown and cast them away. No man can point to any sentiments which we have rejected, because they are opposed to our reason merely; if we reject them, it is because we think they are not taught of God.

Those who come and see, will find that this charge *cannot* possibly be true. We cannot exalt reason against revelation, because they always agree; they never are in the least opposed to each other. Every doctrine that we find in the scriptures is a reasonable one—every duty a reasonable service; there is nothing unreasonable in the instructions and demands of Christianity. When reason and revelation thus always and in every respect coincide in their testimony, how can it be said that we accept the evidence of one in preference to that of the other? But it is easy to see whence this charge arose. We do not find in the scriptures the same doctrines which some other christians think they find in the scriptures; our reason teaches us that we must believe what *we* find, not what *they* find. As we act upon our own responsibility, we must act upon our own conviction. Thus, our reason requires us to reject some things which they call the doctrines of the gospel,

simply because we believe that there are not such doctrines in the gospel. In all this, we bow to the authority of the word of God; we exalt reason no higher than other christians. Their reason teaches them to trust their own interpretation in preference to ours; our reason teaches us also to read and judge for ourselves. Their reason is opposed to revelation as we see and explain it; our reason is opposed to revelation as they see and explain it. But this does not give any right to either party, to charge the other with setting its own reason above the authority of God. It is delightful to us to discover and declare, how entirely the doctrines and duties of Christianity are approved by the judgment of every deliberate mind; and we consider it our duty to show to others, that it is their reasonable service to present themselves a living sacrifice to God.

To come to the subject of our doctrines; let those who think our sentiments false and dangerous, come and see what we teach of God. We do not, we confess, teach that God exists in three persons; we do not, however, reject that doctrine merely because it is a mystery, but because it is not taught in the scriptures. How will those who believe it, account for the fact, that it is no where so stated in the scriptures, that they can even give their belief on the subject in scripture words? Would it not be strange, that such a doctrine should be taught only in doubtful and obscure intimations, if it were among the essential truths of the gospel? And how happens it that our Saviour, who doubtless best knew his own nature, should never, so far as appears by the evangelists, have taught the doctrine to his disciples? He constantly speaks of himself as receiving all things from his Father. The whole impression given by what he says of himself, is fully expressed in the words, 'My Father is greater than I;' and when he says, 'I and my Father are one,' he prays, as if in explanation, for his disciples, 'that they and their Father may be one, *even as we are one.*' The only thing approaching to a statement of this doctrine, which any one professes to find in his words, is in the form of baptism, 'in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost.' But all Christians believe in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.' What resemblance does this bear to the doctrine that the Father is God, the Son

is God, and the Holy Ghost is God? and yet these are not three Gods, but one God. We reject that doctrine because we cannot find it in the scriptures.

There are other doctrines with respect to the Divine Character, which we do not preach for the same reason; because we do not find them in the scripture. We do not preach that any individuals are elected to eternal happiness, or eternal woe. The election spoken of in scripture, is the election of a nation, like the Jews, or of a body of men like the Christians, to enjoy certain privileges which are not given to the rest of the world. To elect men in this way, to superior privileges, is not unjust, because there is after death the judgment, and to whom much is given, of him shall much be required. But to elect them to eternal life or to eternal woe, would not be just, because after that, there could be no retribution. The rewards of conduct and character never could be impartially awarded, and a perpetual inequality would remain in the condition and destinies of men, such as cannot exist for ever under the government of a just God; he allows the bad to prosper, and the good to suffer in the world, for the sake of trial and improvement, but the retribution will make all things right at last. These privileges to which we are sometimes elected in this world, are lent, not given; they are trusts, not favours; and they who enjoy them, must answer for the use or abuse of every one. That the Jews were an elected people, or that the Christians are an elected people, has no respect whatever to final salvation; and though Christians, like St. Paul, call themselves elect of God, let them, like him, fear and labour, lest they be cast away at last. Those who come and see will find that we preach the election of Christians, and the election of character, but not the election of individuals to eternal life. No human ingenuity can give any reason, to shew the use or advantage of preaching to men that they are under a destiny which was fixed before they were born. One thing is certain; if that destiny can be altered, it is not fixed; and if it is fixed, it cannot be altered. If it is fixed, the elect to eternal life have nothing to do nor to dread; and those not elected, cannot gain a hope of heaven, by all that they can do. This doctrine would destroy at once all the hopes and fears of religion, by changing hope into presumptuous assurance, and the fears of the guilty into despair.

Those who come and see, will find that we represent God as sending his Son to reconcile men to each other and to Him. They will not find, that we speak as some others do of the divine wrath and vengeance; we do not believe that such passions can reside in the Almighty; and therefore we cannot suppose, that it was the object of our Saviour's coming to reconcile God to us. He never has been unfriendly to us; he has always been kind, forbearing, forgiving, and I may say affectionate to us; it was because 'he so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son.' What was needed was, to reconcile men to him; to reconcile them to his character, his providence, his commands and their own duty. Since the enmity is all on the side of man, and God is so invariably merciful that he bears the name of Love, we cannot admit for a moment that the wrath of the Father required to be quenched by the blood of his Son. Our Saviour died, and died for men, it is true: but it was man that crucified him; he was destroyed by the hands and the passions of men; it was the love, the unchanging love of God, which gave such power to his death. Through him 'we have received the atonement;' he has opened the way for our reconciliation with God.

Those who come and see, will find that we represent God as a Father. We delight in that resemblance and comparison, not only because it recommends him to our confidence and love, but because it explains to us all that we need and desire to know; we all know what a father is, and what may be expected from a father. A human father is preparing his children for mature and active life; he gives them all the means of improvement and instruction, and assures them that if they waste the spring-tide of existence, they will be miserable; if they improve it aright, they will be respectable and happy. In the same way our heavenly Father is preparing his children for the maturer years of the soul. The world is not the place where our lives are to be passed; this life is but the childhood, the preparing time of existence. God gives us the means of improvement here, and assures us that our future destiny shall depend upon the characters we form. Shall a son who becomes dishonoured by his vices, blame his father for his fall? His father did all for him that he could; from the nature of the case, no compulsion—nothing but moral power could

be exerted. Shall the soul that perishes, upbraid its heavenly Father with its doom? He exerted upon it all the means and influences to make it holy, which its nature would admit; it *would not be holy*, and therefore *could not be happy*. Shall the guilty say that God, if he is merciful, might then have made it good? There is no such thing as *making good*: goodness is not goodness unless it is a voluntary thing; it must be the choice and consent of our own hearts, or it is nothing. When we call our God then by the endearing name of Father, besides that the name inspires confidence and love, it teaches us how much we have reason to ask or hope from him, and what weight of obligation rests upon our own souls. He gives us ample power, he sets before us ample inducements, to form the christian character; if we need more aid, he will give it to those who ask it in prayer. He is the guide and guardian of our way; every thing we enjoy in this world or hope for in another, proceeds from his never weary love. His is the kingdom; he is the only sovereign of the soul: his is the power; we can do nothing, but what he enables us to do: his is the glory; he has declared that he will not give it to another: therefore we ascribe the kingdom, the power, and the glory to God alone.

But they say that by representing God as thus forbearing, kind, and gracious, we remove all religious fears. Let them come and see. They will find, that there are two kinds of fear. If of two human parents one is kind and affectionate, the other stern and severe, a child will fear the presence and person of the latter, while he cares little for his displeasure; he will be unwilling to come near him; he will fear the presence of such a parent, as a restraint and burden. On the other hand, the child of a kind parent will love his father's presence, and will treat him with confidence and affection; without fearing his person, he will fear nothing so much as his displeasure. The distinction between fearing the divine person, and fearing the divine displeasure, is not made as it should be. There are some christians, who by representing God as severe and stern, make their followers afraid of *Him*, without inspiring in them the least fear of his displeasure. We think that ours is a more excellent way. By holding up the divine character to the admiration and love of men;

by endeavouring to remove that dread of God's presence which prevents all free and happy communion with him; by shewing that he deals with men like a Father, with even more than the tenderness of human affection, we believe that we inspire and increase the fear of the divine displeasure, which in our view, is the only fear which religion aims to awaken. Those who come and see, will find that while we do endeavour to remove such fears as prevent men from going boldly to the throne of grace, and casting their care on their God, we do, by the very same exertion, if we succeed in it, make them fear the divine displeasure more than any thing beside. This is the case with those who seriously and conscientiously embrace our opinions; but in our sect, as well as every other, there are those who, for various reasons, wear its colors and range themselves in its lines, while they do not know its principles, do not feel its spirit, and therefore will not be taken by any just observer as examples of the effect of our faith upon the life and heart.

Secondly, let them come and see what we teach of Jesus Christ.

If they ask of some persons of other sects, what are our sentiments with respect to the Saviour, they will be told, that we represent Jesus Christ as a mere common man. Now, it is reasonable to ask, why they believe this is true? Have they ever heard it declared by one of our number? No! they have received that impression from those, who have a strong dislike to our sentiments, and who, like themselves, have never taken pains to ascertain whether it is true. Ask them why they charge us with saying that he is no more than man, they will offer no evidence of the fact, but will simply reply, that we must necessarily represent him as nothing more than man, if we will not allow that he is God. This, it will be observed, is their assertion, not ours; and yet on the strength of this assertion, they charge us with preaching a doctrine, which no man ever heard us preach—which no man knows that we believe, they take those sentiments which they *think it likely* that we believe, not what *they have ascertained* that we believe, nor what they have heard us express. Thus, they accuse, try, and condemn us, with no better evidence than suspicion.

Let them come and see. They will hear our sentiments preached without reserve; let them see if this is among them. They will find that we represent that wonderful being as inferior to the Father, and to the Father alone. We believe the Father to be one being and the Son another; they are one, only as 'he that planteth and watereth are one.' They will find, that we represent Jesus Christ, as far exalted above the children of men,—fitted alike in his nature, character and powers, to be the Saviour, Mediator, and Judge of the world. Those who have made this charge against us, will make it still; it was founded upon nothing we have ever said, and therefore nothing that we can say will induce them to retract it. But to those who are willing to hear, we repeat, that our doctrine is simply this, that Jesus Christ was inferior to the Father, and the Father alone: of all beings, with one exception, he is by far the most exalted. While we believe in the divinity of his character, of his office, and his power,—in the divinity of his actions and his words, we ought not to be charged with making him a mere common man, simply for saying that he is a being distinct from and inferior to the Almighty. We cannot read the words, 'This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent,' without the conviction, that the beings there named, are entirely distinct from each other: nor can we feel as if it were a crime to say in the very words of inspiration, 'to us there is but one God, the Father.'

But they say that our faith deprives the world of an all-sufficient Saviour. If they will come, they will see that we do not, as they imagine, represent Jesus Christ as a man, attempting to save the world by merely human power. He said, 'all power is given unto me, in heaven and earth.' Such is the power which resides in his hands, and which he employs for the salvation of men; let those who say that this is insufficient, say, what greater power can there be? Is it thought dishonourable to the Saviour, to say that 'all things were *delivered* unto him by the Father?'—will that power be less effectual, because God gave it, than if it had been his own? If, as he said, he could of himself do nothing, still, when armed with the power of God, he can do all that is needed for the salvation of men. 'The Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save.' The divine

power remains the same ; it can be no greater if there are three persons in the Godhead ; it can be no less if there is but one. No views of religion can represent it as more than infinite ; none can make it less ; and when Jesus Christ comes to us in his Father's name, we feel as much confidence in his power to aid us, as if he acted on his own authority and employed his own power. Let them no longer complain that we deprive men of an all-sufficient Saviour ; let them not say of us again, ' they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him ;' let them remember that she who made the complaint, if she had understood the Scripture, would not have looked for him there. No one had taken her Lord away, but she was seeking him where he was not to be found ; and Jesus was standing by her, at the very moment when she was lamenting him as lost forever.

Neither will they find that when we say that the Father is superior to the Son, we deprive the Son of that reverence, gratitude and love that should be paid him, and that are paid him by every sincere Christian, whatever name he bears. Though he was not God, it is not the less true, that he did all that could be done for us ; he endured all that nature could bear for us ; he gave up all that could be sacrificed for us. For us he submitted to the humiliation, dishonour and suffering of life ; for us he died in agony, when he had finished the work that was given him to do. Does any one deny that he endured the cross,—that his spirit gushed forth in blood ? Does any one deny that he suffered this anguish of body and mind, which we tremble to think of, for our salvation ? Does any one say that his death was not needed, or that the Lamb of God had no power in his death to take away the sin of the world ? If any believe that we deny these things, let them come and see ; let them join with us to remember that Friend, whose love was stronger than death ; let them unite in our devotions, and they will not say again that we hold the services, the sufferings, or the death of our Master in light esteem : they will find ours joined with the thousand voices, which say, ' Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and glory and blessing ;' they will not find us silent, when all that

are in heaven and earth say, 'Blessing and honour, and glory and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.'

~ Still they say, that our faith respecting the Saviour is a cold and dreary system, which chills all the religious affections, and spreads a sort of winter over the soul. Our faith believes in God the Father, in Jesus Christ the Saviour, in eternity, in retribution. How can it be a cold system, so long as thoughts like these have power to warm the soul? Let those who say this, come; they will see that our system is not colder to them, than theirs is to us. If they read our writings and hear our preaching with a strong feeling of dislike and dread, how can it be otherwise than cold to them? Nothing that men dislike and disbelieve, ever has power to warm the heart; so that when they call our faith cold and dreary, they simply mean that they do not believe it; and they are no judges of its effect on those who do believe it. Do they say that we are cold? We confess that it is so; we lament that so little warm and pure religious affection appears in any party; we see many fires of religious passion burning; we see men zealous enough, in advancing the influence and interests of their own party; we see them constant enough in services of devotion, which they themselves have made; but we see but little any where, of that pure, warm, peaceful and benevolent feeling, which Christianity labours to inspire. And one reason of this deficiency seems to be, that where religious passions prevail, they keep down and destroy religious feelings; the loud and violent passion, and the gentle and fervent feeling, cannot live together—cannot be inmates of the same breast. We will not say that the faith of other christians is cold, because we are no judges of its effects on them; every faith is cold to the breast that does not give it a friendly welcome; nor will we allow that others are any judges of the effect of our sentiments, till they believe them, love them, apply them to their lives, and in that way make trial of their power.

(To be continued.)

GENUINE LETTER TO AN EVANGELICAL LADY,

Who has induced her husband to join the Established Church, contrary to his religious convictions.

My dear Mrs. S.

ADMITTING the excellence of your general character, and the sincerity of your christian zeal, I do not feel it necessary to make any apology for the liberty which I am about to take, in frankly reprehending certain grievous errors into which you have fallen, through the unhappy influence of an over-charged enthusiasm. I believe, that like many others, you mean well, and think that "you are doing God service," whilst you are violating some of his most holy laws. But, this fact of an honest intention, though it may take away all taint of personal guilt from your actions, by no means deprives them of their injurious tendency. It is in the earnest hope of inducing you to reflect upon the consequences of your conduct, that I now address you, in the spirit of perfect sincerity and good-will.

I think, you will agree with the Apostle when he states, that no acceptable worship can be offered unto God, without "a pure heart and faith unfeigned." So fully are you impressed with the importance of this principle, that, I am persuaded, you would this moment rather submit to any earthly privation, than habitually worship in a Unitarian Meeting-house, or a Catholic Chapel. I honour you in this: you consider them to be in great error, and you could not, without hypocrisy, join in their services. But, whilst thus honourably tenacious of your own sincerity and faith, does it never enter into your mind that others have an equal right to value those important principles? If your conscience would not permit you, in accordance with the ordinary and salutary customs of society, to bow down with your husband before the altar of his fathers, upon what plea do you justify your having dragged *him*, contrary to the usages of society, to offer a reluctant and insincere worship, at the strange shrine where you have been accustomed to adore? Perhaps you will reply, that you justify your conduct on the ground of the errors of Unitarianism and the truth of established Orthodoxy. But who has decided the question of error or truth, in the two systems? Is it *you*? Why, my dear Madam, how

often have I heard you lament over your own ignorance and unworthiness : and, after all, are you going to lay claim to infallibility ? That, you know, is the leading crime of the detested Pope, and would be peculiarly dishonourable to a true evangelical Protestant ! But, if you do not lay claim to infallibility, it may be that your husband's faith is that of the Gospel, and your own erroneous. The world, at least, considers him a man of sound and dispassionate judgment, as little likely as yourself to be swayed by prejudice or error. If it should happen, then, after all, that he is in the right, pray, my good friend, how will you justify yourself to God, for having teased a man, who would otherwise have been faithful, into a hypocritical and erroneous worship ?

But, take the case in the most favourable way : suppose your faith to be absolutely right, and that of your husband absolutely wrong : what have you gained by leading him, like a growling child, to a reluctant service in the established church ? Have you changed his opinions ? No. Does he believe in the Athanasian creed and the Thirty-nine Articles, or does he pray to our Lord Jesus Christ for deliverance, "by his incarnation and bloody sweat, by his holy death and burial ?" You *know* that he does not : you see him writhing under the infliction of your church's dogmata : and what he only disapproved and lamented when he could honestly worship in a Unitarian temple, he now abhors as a solemn mockery, when he is compelled weekly to endure it ! And is this your gain, and this your boast ? If an erroneous faith be damnable, he is still in the gall of bitterness, still a Unitarian ; and the only change which you have effected is that of making him a degraded hypocrite, carrying into the house of God a weekly oblation of mockery and insult in the form of devotion ! I solemnly beseech you, my friend, to pause, and look upon the desolation you have produced in a once honest and candid mind, and to consider whether God can be pleased with merely "bodily exercise," whilst the heart, and the mind, and the soul, are all alien to the deed ? When you lead him into church, and seat yourself in your pew, you look around with an air of triumph, as if to claim applause for the mighty work which you have achieved. Yes, you have triumphed over

your husband's integrity and honour, and you are well entitled to all the praise which such a victory deserves ! Were he with you honestly, in faith and spirit, I should never blame him : he, then, would be acting virtuously, as you now are, in offering a sincere, though it may be an erroneous worship ; but, I must state to you my real conviction—it would be better for him to be an honest infidel, Hindoo, or Mahometan, than a Christian mocking God to please a woman !

If, my dear Madam, your husband has changed his worship without changing his creed, in order, as some allege, to satisfy your weak and contracted scruples concerning his future salvation, such a fact might prove him to be an indulgent and tender partner, but it would say little for his christian integrity. And in what an unenviable situation would this explanation place yourself ? It would set you before the world, in the contradictory and absurd character of a rigid stickler for evangelical faith and purity, demanding the sacrifice of a husband's fidelity to God, as the earnest of his soul's salvation, and the fountain of his christian comfort ! I do hope, I do believe, my worthy friend, that you have not seriously considered the awful responsibility of your conduct, in this affair. You have kept an object in view, without reflecting upon the means by which you were seeking to attain it, or of the consequences which they might involve ; for, I cannot imagine, that you ever contemplated securing your husband's salvation, by causing him to take the Prayer-Book in his hand, and to walk forward through the world “on the broad way,” of hollow and insincere profession !

I advert, with entire incredulity, to another explanation which some ill-natured persons have given of your husband's conduct, viz.—that you *teased* him into an acquiescence with your humour. From what I have seen in many other cases, where by a sullen and harassing pertinacity, Catholic wives have *converted* (as it is called) Protestant husbands, and Trinitarian dames have carried away their Unitarian partners, I might be disposed to credit the insinuation, were I not well acquainted with the gentle and amiable dispositions of my friend. Although in many cases a gloomy and perverted theology does deface the fairest lineaments of humanity, destroying the affections of kindred, and inverting the

order of nature, I am persuaded that such is not your condition. But, I am not so much at ease, with regard to the complacency with which you contemplate your success, by whatever means it may have been achieved. Believe me, my friend, the true honour of a Christian spouse consists in the humble, unobtrusive discharge of the duties of her *own* station, and not in trenching upon those of her husband. Equally by the laws of nature and those of the Gospel, "the man is ordained to be the head of the woman," and she who, by fanaticism or ill temper, succeeds in overturning this divine order, whilst she degrades her husband, inflicts tenfold degradation upon herself. Such unfortunate beings are by no means rare, in the present times: the devotees of all churches are pertinacious, and the most absurd are almost always the most successful: but, if the triumphant wife and the governed husband could hear the merited taunts and sneers of those by whom they are surrounded, they would consider the unnatural victory of the one, and the degrading peace of the other, as purchased at too dear a rate.

I have heard it urged both in your defence and that of your husband, that he had no very strong religious convictions or tendencies to sacrifice in yielding to your sway. It may be so; but, if it be, the case would not be improved. If he had little religion to lose, you ought to have guarded it with the more jealous care: if his faith was weak, you ought to have strengthened his integrity; if his morality was ever defective, you should not have lessened the influence of those principles which alone could purify and reform it. Believe me, neither faith nor good works will be promoted by habits of heartless devotion and insincere profession.

The real source of your error I conceive to be, the undue importance which interested men have been able to attach to modes of faith and forms of worship, as if these were the essentials of religion. You appear to think, if your husband worship within consecrated walls, and according to certain antiquated formulas, though in his heart he despises them, that he is then "as a brand plucked from the burning." You cannot, however, forget, that "it is the *heart* which God requires:" and that the "true worshipper must worship the FATHER, in spirit and in truth?" Yet, you lead

your husband to worship two other Beings besides the Father. Instead too of worshipping in *spirit*, his soul loathes the service in which he is engaged; and in place of worshipping in *truth*, he offers the sacrifice of what to him, at least, is a positive *lie*! The Scribes and Pharisees, *hypocrites*, were constantly denounced by our blessed Saviour. The mockery of God, in any place, is dreadful; but on his day and in his house it is appalling. Do you ever think of these things? I am confident you do not, or you would not plunge the man whom you love in the horrid guilt of insincere devotion—a guilt compared with which, all mere errors of faith are but as a drop to the ocean. Be advised; do as you know I do: encourage your husband to be honest in religion; that being faithful to his God, he may be faithful to yourself. Believe me, there may be one heart between you, with two creeds; and the most perfect esteem, though you should bow at different altars. If women tease men into being hypocrites before God, they may reasonably calculate on being themselves deceived: and I assure you, the most unfaithful husbands of my acquaintance, are those who recompense themselves for a heartless, irksome, sour profession of religion, by a secret violation of the laws of morality.

I purposed pleading with you on many other points, especially on the dreadful crime of compelling your husband to violate his *baptismal vows*, by bringing up his children in a faith which he sincerely believes to be directly opposed to God's holy word; as also on the discarding of so many of his old esteemed friends, on the new and strange associates by whom he is surrounded, and on the general, growing gloominess of your domestic circle. But both paper and time compel me, for the present, to forbear. In the mean time, do *think* of what I have advanced, purely out of a sincere and honest regard for your real interest and peace.

The writer and receiver of this letter can be known only to ourselves; though unhappily cases similar to yours are so numerous in the present professing age, that thousands may apply it to their friends and neighbours. That it may be so applied is my object in its publication; and, I believe, you have good sense and good feeling sufficient to make you appreciate the motives of your sincerely affectionate friend, MARY.

Dublin, October 30th, 1833.

Intelligence.

DEATH OF RAMMOHUN ROY,

With a Memoir of his Life and Writings.

RAMMOHUN ROY, one of the most remarkable and justly distinguished men that any age or country ever produced, died on the 27th September, 1833, at the house of Miss Castle, a Unitarian Lady, near Bristol. The following account of the Life and Writings of this illustrious man, (by, it is supposed, the Rev. Dr. Carpenter, of Bristol,) will be read with great interest. We have reason to believe that the Memoir is exceedingly accurate in its details; for, the writer of these introductory sentences enjoyed the high satisfaction of being personally acquainted with Rammohun Roy, and also of learning several particulars of his history and character, from a most enlightened gentleman, who was, for many years, the Rajah's intimate friend, in Calcutta.

Those alone who know the deadening influence of the Hindoo Idolatry, with its *three hundred and thirty-six millions of gods*, and who also consider that Rammohun Roy was of the highest, or *priestly Caste*, can form any thing like an adequate idea of that amazing energy and power of mind which enabled him to burst the thousand chains of superstition, and to walk forth in the free and holy worship of "the ONE living and true God." Nor was he aided in this mighty achievement. At the period when the light of truth first dawned upon his mind, he was totally unacquainted with European literature, and had not even heard of the name of Christianity. He taught the first principle of all religion to his countrymen, namely, the Existence and Government of One all-perfect God, before he ever saw a Bible. And, when he did begin to study the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, he was uninfluenced by creeds, catechisms, or commentaries. He came to the Bible itself, with a pure, unbiassed mind, to ascertain what it *really* taught, concerning God, and his Son, Jesus Christ. And, what was the result of his patient, learned, acute, unprejudiced investigation? He became a convert to Christianity—to Unitarian Christianity. And such, we believe, would be the issue in all cases of serious inquiry, were not the prejudices of education and the interests of the world too frequently suffered to prevail. We rejoice to think that the disinterested testimony of such a man in favour of Unitarian Truth, is calculated to overbalance the arguments of ten thousand official, prejudiced advocates, in favour of popular and profitable opinions!

But, how did the Christian Missionaries of India meet his accession to the Christian cause? Did they extend the right hand of fellowship to a man whose profound learning, amazing talents, and high morality, would have added lustre to any cause; and whose name and connexion would have opened up innumerable avenues of usefulness? No! they wished the Hindoos to continue in the worship of Juggernaut, rather than become Unitarian Christians. They met him with reproach, revilings, and misrepresentation, because he sent "the Precepts of Jesus" amongst his countrymen,

instead of the creeds, the irrational human inventions of Churches. But, thank God, with the might of a giant intellect, and the meek spirit of a true Christian, he repeatedly prostrated Dr. Marshman, their noblest champion, in the dust; and has left on record an imperishable monument of his learning, talents, and veneration for the truth.

His integrity was equal to his genius. When persecuted by his relatives, on account of his rejection of Idolatry, and threatened by the Indian Law with the total loss of property, an offer was made to drop all proceedings against him, if he would present but a single flower as a sacrifice upon the altar of the idol *Vishnu*. The proposal he rejected with indignation; and although he preserved his *Caste*, by never violating the merely ceremonial observances of the Brahmins, as to meats, drinks, &c. he never once joined in their idolatrous and superstitious worship.

The description of his person, manners, and conversation, in the following Memoir, is very correct and graphic. He was, indeed, a most extraordinary and a most interesting man; pre-eminently gifted by nature, possessing literary attainments of the highest order, singularly versed in historical, political, and general knowledge, and peculiarly courteous, unassuming, and agreeable, in his entire deportment and conversation.

EDITOR.

RAMMOHUN Roy was the son of Ram Hant Roy. His grandfather resided at Moorshedabad, and filled some important offices under the Moguls: but being ill-treated by them towards the end of his life, the son took up his abode in the district of Bordouan, where he had landed property. There Rammohun Roy was born; some say about 1780, but more probably some years earlier. Under his father's roof he received the elements of native education, and also acquired the Persian language. He was afterwards sent to Patna to learn Arabic; and lastly to Calcutta to obtain a knowledge of the Sanscrit, the sacred language of the Hindoos. His masters at Patna set him to study Arabic translations of some of the writings of Aristotle and Euclid: and it is possible that the training thus given his mind in acuteness and close reasoning, and the knowledge which he acquired of the Mahomedan religion from Mussulmen whom he esteemed, contributed to cause that searching examination of the faith in which he was educated, which led him eventually to the important efforts he made to restore it to its early simplicity. His family was Brahminical, of high respectability; and, of course, he was a Brahmin by birth. After his death the thread of his caste was seen round him, passing over his left shoulder and under his right. His father trained him in the doctrines of his sect, but he very early observed the diversities of opinions existing even among the idolaters; and that while some exalted Brama, the Creator, others gave the ascendancy to Vishnu, the Preserver; and others again to Sivah, the Destroyer. It is scarcely possible but his mind must have been struck by the simplicity of the Mahomedan faith and worship; and at any rate it early revolted from the frivolous or disgusting rites and ceremonies of Hindoo idolatry. Without disputing the authority of his father, he often sought from him information as to the reasons of his faith. He obtained no satisfaction;

and he at last determined, at the early age of fifteen, to leave the paternal home, and sojourn for a time in Thibet, that he might see another form of religious faith. He spent two or three years in that country, and often excited the anger of the worshippers of the Lama by his rejection of their doctrine that this pretended deity—a living man—was the creator and preserver of the world. In these circumstances he experienced the soothing kindness of the female part of the family ; and his gentle, feeling heart lately dwelt, with deep interest, at the distance of more than forty years, on the recollections of that period, which, he said, had made him always feel respect and gratitude towards the female sex, and which doubtless contributed to that unvarying and refined courtesy which marked his intercourse with them in this country. When he returned to Hindostan, he was met by a deputation from his father, and received by him with great consideration. He appears, from that time, to have devoted himself to the study of Sanscrit and other languages, and of the ancient books of the Hindoos. He had frequent discussions with his father ; through awe of him, however, he never avowed the scepticism which he entertained as to the present forms of their religion ; but from some indirect reproaches he received, he imagined that he had fallen under his father's suspicions. His father had given him for that country a very superior education ; but having been brought up himself in the midst of the Mussulman Court, he appears to have thought principally of those qualifications which would recommend his son to the ancient conquerors of India ; and till manhood Rammohun Roy knew little of the English language, and that little he taught himself.

The father, Ram Hant Roy, died about 1804 or 5, having two years before divided his property among his three sons. It was not long before Ramohun Roy became the only survivor ; and he thereby possessed considerable property. From this period he appears to have commenced his plans of reforming the religion of his countrymen ; and, in the progress of his efforts to enlighten them, he must have expended large sums of money, for he gratuitously distributed most of the works which he published for the purpose. He now quitted Bordouan and removed to Moorshedabad, where he published in Persian, with an Arabic preface, a work entitled, "*Against the Idolatry of all Religions.*" No one undertook to refute this book ; but it raised up against him an host of enemies ; and in 1814 he retired to Calcutta, where he applied himself to the study of the English language both by reading and by conversation ; and also acquired some knowledge of Latin, and paid much attention to the mathematics. At this time he purchased a garden, with a house constructed in the Circular Road, at the eastern extremity of the city ; and he gradually gathered round him inquiring intelligent Hindoos, of rank and opulence, some of whom united as early as 1818 in a species of monotheistic worship.

The body of Hindoo theology is comprised in the Veds, which are writings of very high antiquity, very copious, but obscure in style ; and about 2000 years ago, Vyas drew up a compendious abstract of the whole, accompanied with explanations of the more difficult passages. This digest, Vyas called the Vedant, or the Reso-

lution of all the Veds.—One portion of this respects the ritual, and another the principles of religion. It is written in the Sanscrit language. Ramohun Roy translated it into the Bengalee and Hindoo language, for the benefit of his countrymen; and afterwards published an abridgment of it, for gratuitous and extensive distribution. Of this abridgment he published an English translation in 1816, the title of which represents the Vedantas “the most celebrated and revered work of Brahminical theology, establishing the unity of the Supreme Being, and that he alone is the object of propitiation and worship.” Towards the close of his preface he thus writes—“My constant reflections on the inconvenient, or rather injurious rites introduced by the peculiar practice of Hindoo idolatry, which, more than any other Pagan worship, destroys the texture of society—together with compassion for my countrymen—have compelled me to use every possible effort to awaken them from their dream of error; and by making them acquainted with the (their) Scriptures, enable them to contemplate, with true devotion, the unity and omnipresence of nature’s God. By taking the path which conscience and sincerity direct, I, born a Brahmin, have exposed myself to the complainings and reproaches even of some of my relations, whose prejudices are strong, and whose temporal advantage depends on the present system. But these, however accumulated, I can tranquilly bear; trusting that a day will arrive when my humble endeavours will be viewed with justice—perhaps acknowledged with gratitude. At any rate, whatever men may say, I cannot be deprived of this consolation—my motives are acceptable to that Being who beholds in secret and compensates openly.”

After the publication of the Vedant, Rammohun Roy printed in Bengalee and in English, some of the principal chapters of the Veds. The first of the series was published in 1816, and is entitled, “A Translation of the Cena Upanishad, one of the Chapters of the Sama Veda, according to the gloss of the celebrated Shanacaracharya; establishing the Unity and sole Omnipotence of the Supreme Being, and that He alone is the object of Worship.” This was prefixed to a reprint of the abridgment of the Vedant, published in London, in 1827, by some one who had enjoyed personal intimacy with him. The English preface contains a letter from Ramohun Roy to this gentleman, which shews how well he had, even at that time, overcome the difficulties of the English language. ‘*The consequence of my long and uninterrupted researches into religious truth,*’ (he says in this letter,) ‘*has been, that I have found the doctrines of Christ more conducive to moral principles, and better adapted for the use of rational beings than any other which have come to my knowledge:* and have also found Hindoos in general more superstitious and miserable, both in performance of their religious rites, and in their domestic concerns, than the rest of the known nations of the earth.’ He then proceeds to state what he had done in order to render them ‘more happy and comfortable both here and hereafter;’ and adds, ‘I, however, in the beginning of my pursuits met with the greatest opposition from their self-interested leaders the Brahmins, and was deserted by my nearest relations; and I consequently felt extremely melancholy. In that cri-

tical situation, the only comfort that I had, was the consoling and rational conversation of my European friends, especially those of Scotland and England.' In that same letter he expresses his full expectation of speedily setting off for England; but says he had been prevented from proceeding so soon as he could wish, by the spread of his views, and the inclination manifested by many to seek for truth.

It is not surprising that the interested advocates for heathen worship should endeavour to uphold it by imputations on the character of the Reformer; and some one did publicly charge him with 'rashness, self-conceit, arrogance and impiety.' Every member of his own family opposed him; and he experienced even the bitter alienation of his mother through the influence of the interested persons around her. He recently stated, however, that before her death she expressed her great sorrow for what had passed, and declared her firm conviction in the unity of God, and the futility of Hindoo superstition.

D'Acosta, the Editor of a Journal at Calcutta, transmitted to the Abbe Gregoire, in 1818, the various publications of this extraordinary man, with some account of his history; and through Gregoire, Rammohun Roy became extensively known and highly appreciated in France. D'Acosta says, he carefully avoided every thing that could afford a pretext for excluding him from his caste, since, as a Brahmin, it was his acknowledged duty to instruct his countrymen in the sense and real commands of their sacred books. He speaks of him as distinguished in his controversy more by his logical mode of reasoning than by his general views, though far from deficient in philosophy or information.—He says, that all his conversation, his actions, and his manners, evince a powerful sentiment of individual dignity; while, in general, meanness and feebleness of mind are characteristic of the Hindoo; and that ingenuous conversation often shews, in a strain half serious and half sportive, all that he wished to be able to do for his country. As to his personal exterior at that period, d'Acosta says—'He is tall and robust; his regular features, and habitually grave countenance, assume a most pleasing appearance when he is animated; he appears to have a slight disposition to melancholy.' 'The moderation,' adds Abbe Gregoire, 'with which he repels the attacks on his writings, the force of his arguments, and his profound knowledge of the sacred books of the Hindoos, are proofs of his fitness for the work he has undertaken; and the pecuniary sacrifices he has made, show a disinterestedness which cannot be encouraged or admired too warmly.'

It was about this period that Lieut.-Colonel Fitzclarence, now the Earl of Munster, became acquainted with Rammohun Roy. He speaks highly of this 'most extraordinary' Brahmin, of his talents and learning, his intimate knowledge of our language and eloquence in the use of it, his extensive acquaintance with our literature, as well as with the Arabic and Sanscrit, his clear intelligence of the politics of Europe and especially of England, of his fine person, and most courtly manners. The representations of the Earl indicate the amazing extent, tenaciousness, and accuracy of his me-

mony ; and in this and other respects fully accord with what we learn of him from other sources. The author was, however, mistaken in supposing that he had been ' declared to have lost caste.' Rammo-hun Roy recently stated that every effort had been made for the purpose, and that he had, at an enormous expense, to defend himself against a series of legal proceedings instituted for the purpose of depriving him of caste, and thereby of his patrimonial inheritance.—Through his profound acquaintance, however, with the Hindoo law, he baffled the efforts of his enemies, and proved in the courts of justice, that he had not forfeited his rights.

Besides essentially contributing to the establishment and maintenance of native schools, he directed his efforts, and with great success, towards the extinction of the practice of burning widows. One of these tracts on this subject he dedicated to the Marchioness of Hastings, when the Marquis was Governor General.

It has been already shown, that as early as 1817 he had directed his attention to the Christian religion ; but he found himself greatly perplexed by the various creeds which he found insisted upon as essential to Christianity, in the writings of Christian authors, and in conversation with those christian teachers with whom he had communication. He resolved therefore, to study the original Scriptures for himself ; and for this purpose he acquired the knowledge of the Hebrew and Greek languages. Becoming strongly impressed with the excellence and importance of the Christian system of morality, he published in 1820, in English, Sanscrit and Bengalee, a series of selections, principally from the first three Gospels, which he entitled, " The Precepts of Jesus the Guide to Peace and Immortality." He passed by those portions of the Evangelists which have been made the basis of distinctive doctrines ; and also, (except where closely interwoven with the discourses of Christ,) the narrative of miracles—believing these to be less fitted to affect the convictions of his countrymen, while the preceptive part he deemed most likely ' to produce the desirable effect of improving the hearts and minds of men of different persuasions and degrees of understanding.' ' This simple code of religion and morality,' he says, at the close of his preface, " is so admirably calculated to elevate men's ideas to high and liberal notions of one God, who has equally subjected all living creatures, without distinction of caste, rank, or wealth, to change, disappointment, pain and death, and has equally admitted all to be partakers of the bountiful mercies which he has lavished over nature ; and is also well fitted to regulate the conduct of the human race in the discharge of their various duties to God, to themselves, and to society ; that I cannot but hope the best effects from its promulgation in the present form."

This work was published anonymously, but, as appears, without concealment. It brought upon him some severe and unexpected animadversions in ' The Friend of India ;' the writer of which uncourteously, as well as most unjustly, spoke of the Compiler as a *heathen*. Under the designation of ' A Friend to Truth,' Rammo-hun Roy published ' An Appeal to the Christian Public in defence of the Precepts of Jesus ;' in which he declares, that the expressions employed in the preface should have shown the opponent ' that the

Compiler believed, not only in one God whose nature and essence is beyond human comprehension, but in the truths revealed in the Christian system.' He further maintains that the 'Precepts of Jesus' 'contain not only the essence of all that is necessary to instruct mankind in their civil duties, but also the best and only means of obtaining the forgiveness of our sins, the favour of God, and strength to overcome our passions and to keep his commandments.' He defends the system which the Compiler had adopted to introduce Christianity to the native inhabitants, by appealing to the fact that nearly three-fifths are Hindoos and two-fifths Moosulmans, the latter devoted from their infancy to the belief in one God; and declares that from his own experience in religious controversy with them, he is satisfied that he was rendering them most service by making them acquainted with those precepts 'the obedience to which he believed most peculiarly required of a Christian, and such as could by no means tend in doctrine to excite the religious horror of the Mahomedans, or the scoffs of the Hindoos.' 'Such dogmas or doctrinal and other passages,' he afterwards says, 'as are not exposed to those objections, and are not unfamiliar to the minds of those for whose benefit the compilation was intended, are generally included, in conformity with the avowed plan of the work; particularly such as seem calculated to direct our love and obedience to the beneficent author of the universe, and to him whom he graciously sent to deliver those precepts of religion and morality whose tendency is to promote universal peace and harmony.' When replying to the objections of the Reviewer, (that the precepts of Christ do not show how to obtain the forgiveness of sins and favour of God,) the Friend of Truth extracts from the compilation 'a few passages of that greatest of all prophets who was sent to call sinners to repentance,' and adds, 'Numerous passages of the Old and New Testaments to the same effect, which might fill a volume, distinctly promise us that the forgiveness of God and the favour of his Divine Majesty may be obtained by sincere repentance, as required of sinners by the Redeemer.'

On these anonymous publications, Dr. Marshman, of Serampore College, published a series of animadversions, which led to a very remarkable reply from Rammohun Roy, with his name prefixed. All the publications of this controversy were soon reprinted in London; and those who wish to become acquainted with the sentiments of this remarkable man, as to his Christian belief generally, and his own opinions respecting God and Christ, may be referred with confidence, and in an especial manner, to this Second Appeal to the Christian Public in defence of the 'Precepts of Jesus.' The doctrine maintained in it respecting God is thus stated by himself:—that the Omnipotent God, who is the only proper object of religious veneration, is one and undivided in person; that 'in reliance on numerous promises found in the sacred writings we ought to entertain every hope of enjoying the blessing of pardon from the merciful Father, through repentance, which is declared the only means of procuring forgiveness for our failures;' and that he leads 'such as worship him in spirit to righteous conduct and ultimately to salvation, through his guiding influence which is called the 'Holy Spirit,

given as the consequence of their sincere prayer and supplication.' And respecting 'Jesus of Nazareth' he speaks as 'the Christ of God;' he says he places 'implicit confidence' in his 'veracity, candour, and perfection: he represents him as 'a Being in whom dwelt all truth, and who was sent with a divine law to guide mankind by his preaching and example;' as receiving from the Father, 'the commission to come into the world for the salvation of mankind;' as judging the world by the wisdom of God; of being 'empowered to perform wonderful works.' he speaks of his subordinate nature, and receiving all the powers which he manifested from the Father; but also of his being superior even to the angels in heaven, living from the beginning of the world to eternity,' and of the Father's creating 'all things by him and for him;' and he dwells with great satisfaction (p. 164-167) on the conclusion to which the instructions of Christ had led him, 'that the unity existing between the Father and himself,' is 'a subsisting concord of will and design, such as existed among his Apostles, and not identity of being.' — 'Had not experience (he concludes) too clearly proved that such metaphorical expressions, when taken singly and without attention to their contexts, may be made the foundation of doctrines quite at variance with the tenor of the rest of the Scriptures, I should have had no hesitation in submitting indiscriminately the whole of the doctrines of the New Testament to my countrymen; as I should have felt no apprehension that even the most ignorant of them, if left to the guidance of their unprejudiced views of the matter, could misconceive the clear and distinct assertions they every where contain of the unity of God, and subordinate nature of his messenger Jesus Christ.

The Second Appeal called forth another work from Dr. Marshman; to which Rammouhon Roy published a reply in 1823, under the title of the Final Appeal. His preceding works had been printed at the Baptist Missionary Press; but the acting proprietor declined, "although in the politest manner possible," to print the Final Appeal; and Rammohun Roy purchased type, and commenced an independent printing-office for this and several other publications. The imprint is "Calcutta: printed at the Unitarian Press, Dhurmtollah." He depended chiefly on native aid; and in consequence, the original work has many errata. In the preface he says, that this controversy had prevented other publications which he had projected for his countrymen, as well as drawn him for three years from other literary pursuits; and that it had caused much coolness towards him in the demeanour of some whose friendship he held very dear; nevertheless, that he did not wish he had pursued a different course, since, he says, "whatever may be the opinion of the world, my own conscience fully approves of my past endeavours to defend what I esteem to be the cause of truth."

The Editor of the India Gazette, "a journal devoted to the constituted authorities," in adverting to this discussion, and to the other labours of this distinguished native, thus writes—"We say distinguished, because he is so among his own people, by caste, rank, and respectability; and among all men he must ever be distinguished for his philanthropy, his great learning, and his intel-

lectual ascendancy in general." As to the controversy arising out of the Precepts of Jesus, the Editor says, that whatever other effects it may have caused, "it still further exhibited the acuteness of his mind, the logical power of his intellect, and the unrivalled good temper with which he could argue;" it roused up "a most gigantic combatant in the theological field—a combatant who, we are constrained to say, has not yet met with his match here."

To the public testimonies already adduced, may be added that of the celebrated Sismondi, who, in an article in the *Revue Encyclopedique* for 1824, after some important observations respecting the institution of castes and the sacrifice of widows, thus proceeds: "A glorious reform has, however, begun to spread among the Hindoos. A Brahmin, whom those who know India agree in representing as one of the most virtuous and enlightened of men, Rammohun Roy, is exerting himself to restore his countrymen to the worship of the true God, and to the union of morality and religion. His flock is small, but increase continually. He communicates to the Hindoos all the progress that thought has made among the Europeans. He is among them by a much juster title than the Missionaries, the Apostle of Christianity."

The long formed purpose of this extraordinary and enlightened man to visit Europe, and England in particular, seems to have been suspended by the legal proceedings against him on the subject of caste, and some subsequent occurrences apparently of a similar tendency. At last, however, his actual setting off was announced. On the 8th of April, 1831, he arrived at Liverpool, accompanied by his nephew and adopted son Ram Roy, and two native servants, one of them a Brahmin, and soon after proceeded to London. He arrived among us at a period when the whole nation was in a state of intense excitement, in connexion with Parliamentary Reform; and being well versed in our national history, and intimately acquainted with our political institutions and parties, he saw at once the bearings of the great measure which, he wrote, would "in its consequences promote the welfare of England and her dependencies, nay, of the whole world;" and, among those consequences, he lived to see a most important series of changes commenced, in the connexion of this country with his own; in the preparation of which, there is reason to believe, our Government employed and duly appreciated the advantages which all would expect might be derived from the presence of a man so eminently qualified for the object, by his knowledge, judiciousness, moderation, and patriotism.

The fame of Rammohun Roy had preceded him; but the official character in which he came, together with the state of public affairs, necessarily brought him forward to public notice, even more than might otherwise have been expected. The native Princes of Delhi, conceiving that they had a claim upon the East India Company to a very considerable amount, commissioned Rammohun Roy as their Envoy to represent and urge it; and they gave him by firman, the title of Rajah. His official relation and title were recognised by the British Government; but the East India Company have never acknowledged either, though they always treated him with great consideration, as a highly distinguished individual. He was, how-

ever, presented to his Majesty by the President of the Board of Control, and had a place assigned to him at the Coronation among the Ambassadors. He appears, indeed, to have had no reason for dissatisfaction with our Government, either in his individual or official capacity.

The great notoriety of the Rajah, together with his own unvarying urbanity and solicitude to avoid giving pain to any one, even to the inconsiderate and presuming, exposed him to extreme interruption and inconvenience, and at times to much vexation. Habitual caution to shun every overt act, by which his Brahminical rank might be forfeited, to his own and his children's injury, and to the impairing of his hopes and means of usefulness, seems occasionally to have given to his system of conduct the air of uncertainty, if not of ambiguity. Perhaps, also, there were occasions when questions proposed, with the skill of the practical disputant, to elicit an expression which might support some preformed opinion respecting the Rajah's sentiments, led him, through ignorance of the real bearings of the case, to accord with that which his remarkable clearness of discrimination would have rejected at once if the whole tendency of the enquiry had been before him; and this effect may have been aided by those nice shades in the import of words, which are, as opinions modify, continually varying in their influence. And sometimes that disposition to acquiescence, which eastern politeness requires, and which his own kindness of heart contributed to strengthen, was known to place him in circumstances, and lead him to expressions, which made his sincerity questioned. But, where he was best and fully known, the simplicity, candour, explicitness, and openness of his mind, were striking and acknowledged; and from these, together with his profound acquirements, his extensive information, his quick discrimination of character, his delicacy and honourable sentiments, his benevolent hopes and purposes for human welfare, his benignant concern for the comfort and happiness of all around him, his affectionateness and humility of disposition, his gentleness and quick sensibility, there was a charm in his presence and conversation which made one feel love for him as well as high respect. It was impossible to be much with him in the narrow circle of private life, without entertaining attachment to him, or without feelings approaching to reverence, for the greatness of his endowments, and the way in which he had devoted them to the welfare of his fellow-men, for the high excellencies of his character, for the purity and refinement of his sentiments, and for the earnest and elevated piety of his spirit. Those who had the best opportunities of knowing him, say that the perusal of the Scriptures was his constant practice, and that his devotion was habitual—manifested by stated prayer, and by a frequent absorbedness of soul, the external expression of which left no room for doubt as to the direction and object of it.

Mr. Hare, an Englishman, of Calcutta, of well-known and great respectability, from his earnest attachment to the Rajah, had urged his brothers in Bedford-square, to do every thing in their power for him; and especially to render him those services which he was sure to need in a land so different from his own, and to protect him from

those evils and inconveniencies to which his unsuspecting nature, and ignorance of our customs, might expose him. With great difficulty they at last prevailed upon him, some months after his arrival, to accept a home in their house; and when he went to France for a few weeks, one of them accompanied him to Paris, where he was more than once at the table of Louis Philip. He continued to reside with Mr. John and Mr. Joseph Hare, till he left London for Bristol, to spend a few weeks at Stapleton Grove, where his adopted son had been passing his vacation, and there continued waiting the often delayed arrival of his father. It was the intention of the Rajah to proceed thence to winter in Devonshire, visiting on his way, or on his return, an old and attached friend near Taunton.

While in London, he repeatedly attended the worship of the Unitarians, at their different chapels in or near the metropolis; and he twice attended the anniversary meetings; but it was his system to avoid so far identifying himself with any religious body, as to make himself answerable for their acts and opinions; and he also wished to hear preachers of other denominations who had acquired a just celebrity. He appears to have most frequented the church of the Rev. Dr. Kenney, (St. Saviour's, Southwark,) who peculiarly interested him by the Christian spirit and influence of his discourses. In Bristol he attended worship at the Unitarian chapel, in Lewin's Mead; and there he had directed his son statedly to attend. If he had lived, however, he would have visited other places of worship at their second services; and he went once to the church in the Hotwell Road, with the expectation of hearing the Rev. Mr. Hensam.

His arrival in Bristol seemed to be at last realising hopes which delay in public affairs had so often frustrated.—Those whom he had long honoured with his friendship, had opportunities of unreserved communication with him, on which they now dwell with deep interest and satisfaction. Several others who could appreciate his eminent qualities, had friendly intercourse with him; and arrangements were making to enable more to know him personally, who had learnt to regard him with high respect. But ten days had scarcely elapsed before the fatal disorder had begun its ravages; and in less than ten days more the event arrived which has filled many a heart with dismay and sorrow.

The character of this extraordinary man has, it is hoped, been adequately delineated as the narrative proceeded; and it remains only to present the reader with an account of the last scenes, which he will be glad to receive in the words of that friend whose services during them were incessant, and who is best qualified to give a narration of them.

“On Thursday, the 19th instant, Mr. Estlin, who had enjoyed much intercourse with the Rajah during the preceding week, and had occasionally corresponded with him before he left India, called accidentally at Stapleton, and was informed that he had been indisposed since the preceding day, but had thought medical advice unnecessary, as he had taken some of his usual remedies. On Mr. E's. being announced, however, he requested to see him. He found the Rajah so ill with feverish symptoms, as to occasion him considerable alarm. Medicines were prescribed, and followed by some

relief; but an extremely dry and glazed tongue, frequent pulse and incessant restlessness (though without much increase of heat or local pain,) indicated the continuance of serious disorder. On the following Saturday, Dr. Prichard visited him, and Dr. Carrick attended in consultation on Monday, the 23d. Some of the symptoms in the progress of his illness led to the conclusion that his head was considerably affected, though no pain was felt there, the stomach being the part of which he most complained. His indisposition experienced but a temporary check from the remedies. Severe spasms, with paralysis of the left arm and leg, came on during Thursday, and he fell into a state of stupor during the afternoon of that day, from which he never revived; but breathed his last at twenty-five minutes after two on Friday morning, the 27th Sept. His son, Rajah Ram Roy, and two Hindoo servants, with several attached friends who had watched over him from the first day of his illness, were with him when he expired. Mr. Hare, of Bedford-square, London, under whose roof the Rajah had for two years lived a welcome guest, was also with him during the greater part of his illness; and Mr. Hare's niece, who was well acquainted with his habits, and possessed his full confidence and strong regard, attended upon him day and night, with a degree of earnest and affectionate solicitude, well deserving the epithet of filial. He repeatedly acknowledged, during his illness, his sense of the kindness of all around him, and in strong language expressed the confidence he felt in his medical advisers. It was a source of gratification to the friends with whom he resided in London, to find that, distressing as the event was to the family he was visiting, he had every comfort and accommodation that a large house, a quiet and healthy situation, and attached and affluent friends could bestow. He conversed very little during his illness, but was observed to be often engaged in prayer. He told his son and those around him that he should not recover.—An examination of the body took place on Saturday, when the brain was found to be inflamed, containing some fluid, and covered with a kind of purulent effusion; its membrane also adhered to the skull, the result, probably, of previously existing disease; the thoracic and abdominal viscera were healthy. The case appeared to be one of fever, producing great prostration of the vital powers, and accompanied with inflammation of the brain, which did not exhibit, in their usual degree, the symptoms of that affection. The Rajah was a remarkably stout, well formed man, nearly six feet in height, with a handsome and expressive countenance. A cast for a bust was taken a few hours after his death."

HIS INTERMENT.

The remains of this eminent individual were not deposited in any of the usual receptacles of the dead. "It had always been an object of great importance in the view of the Rajah," says a Bristol paper, "to convince his countrymen that the relinquishment of idol worship, and the abolition of their superstitious and cruel rites, might be effected without deviating from the principles of their ancient faith, or incurring the loss of Brahminical caste—thus wisely preparing the way for the introduction of Christianity among

them. It has, therefore been deemed expedient by the friends who have long been concerned in the management of his affairs, as well as by his son, that his body should not be interred in any of our usual cemeteries. There is also room to apprehend that his enemies in India might avail themselves of the fact of his being buried with Christians, or with Christian rites, to renew their unsuccessful endeavours to deprive him of *caste*, and embarrass his children in their succession to his property. Under these peculiar circumstances they have availed themselves of the permission given to deposit the honoured remains within the walls of Stapleton Grove, there to await any further decision of his family respecting them; fulfilling, by thus interring them alone, and in an appropriate spot, the desire often expressed by the Rajah—"Where he died he would be interred, privately and in silence."

DIED.

At Warrenpoint, on the 5th October, Catherine, second daughter of the late Mr. Robert Mollan, of Newry.—Few, very few have left this transitory scene, followed by such deep and general regret as this amiable and lovely girl. Formed by nature to engage and to retain the love and esteem of the discerning and the good, her gentle and retiring character was beginning to unfold its modest worth, and to promise in the more mature stage of womanhood all that was truly valuable in her sex, when a rapid Consumption hurried her from a corruptible to an incorruptible inheritance—to a world more congenial with her pure and guileless spirit. In her the utmost sweetness of disposition was united to a clearness of judgment and a firmness of mind surpassing her years. Hers were those meek and unobtrusive virtues to which the unthinking world attaches too little value, but which shed a hallowed lustre on the privacy of domestic life. "That charity which suffereth long and is kind, is not easily provoked and thinketh no evil" was the distinguishing feature of her character. Boundless benevolence of design was joined to the most prompt activity of execution; and circumscribed as was her sphere of action, her compassionate soul entered feelingly into the joys and sorrows of the whole human race. Her devotion was that of the Gospel, deep not loud, calm and rational, yet heartfelt and sincere. It was not manifested in the wild ungoverned bursts of enthusiasm, but in the quiet yet cheerful performance of every moral and religious duty. Her probation on earth, has, we have every reason to trust, had a glorious termination, since, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." hers was a pure and teachable spirit, humbly endeavouring to imitate the example of him who came to bring life and immortality to light through the Gospel—Firmly attached to the holy cause of religious freedom and unfettered inquiry, she was enabled through the mercy of her gracious Father to rejoice in the truth, and to find in those simple and heavenly doctrines which a rash and inconsiderate multitude reject and abhor, that peace which the world cannot bestow, that pearl of great price, the possession of which could encourage her calmly to resign every earthly tie, and even in the very bloom of youth "to pass through the valley of the shadow of death, fearing no evil" for "his rod and staff they comforted her." She drank the bitter cup with placid resignation to his divine will who graciously strengthened and supported her,

To quit this transitory scene,
With decent triumph and a soul serene;
Taught her to fix her ardent hopes on high,
And having lived in Him, in Him to die.

"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord; they rest from their labours and their works follow them."

ERRATA.

Page 413, line 37, for discovered, read elicited.

Page 411, l. 10, for pious, read piano; line 17, for vent, read strength.

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DAVID'S REIGN.*

AFTER enduring the hardships of an outlaw, banished from society, and living among rocks and caves, during the life of Saul, David at length ascended the throne; but his reign was troubled with civil dissension and foreign wars, and his life embittered by domestic afflictions. Abner, the confidential counsellor of Saul, instigated his son to assert his claim to the crown, and actually put him in possession of the kingdom of Israel, including the tribes westward of the Jordan, except Judah, which adhered to David. The kingdom of Israel could furnish 850,000 fighting men, and the kingdom of Judah 500,000. The population of the whole, with their slaves, and the original inhabitants still remaining in the land, must therefore have exceeded 7,000,000.

The civil war between David and Ishbosheth continued for seven years, during which time David resided at Hebron, not being able sooner to expel the Jebusites from Jerusalem. The first incident in the war was a desperate combat, or a bloody sport.

"Abner said to Joab, the commander of David's army, "Let the young men now arise and play before us. And Joab said, Let them arise. Then there arose and went over by number twelve of Benjamin, which pertained to Ishbosheth the Son of Saul; and twelve of the servants of David, and they caught every one his fellow by the head, and thrust his sword in his fellow's side; so they fell down together." In the subsequent battle Abner was beaten, and being pursued by Asahel the youngest brother of Joab, he turned his spear, and smote him under the fifth rib, so that he died. In the course of the war "David waxed stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker." At length in consequence of a quarrel be-

* For the death of David's infant, see page 435.

tween Abner and Ishbosheth, "Abner sent messengers to David, saying, Make thy league with me, and, behold, my hand shall be with thee, to bring about all Israel unto thee, and he said, well, I will make a league with thee. And Abner said unto David, I will arise and go, and will gather all Israel unto my Lord the king; that they may make a league with thee: and David sent Abner away, and he went in peace." The throne of David was shortly after fully established by the murder of Ishbosheth by his own people, and the treacherous assassination of Abner by Joab in revenge for the death of Asahel, though killed in battle by Abner in self-defence. This young man seems to have acquired the esteem and affection both of Abner and the people; "for Abner looked behind him, and said, Art thou Asahel? And he answered, I am. And Abner said to him, turn thee aside to thy right hand or to thy left, and lay thee hold on one of the young men, and take thee his armour. But Asahel would not turn aside from following of him. And Abner said again to Asahel, Turn thee aside from following me: wherefore should I smite thee to the ground? How then should I hold up my face to Joab thy brother? Asahel still persisting, Abner smote him that he died. And it came to pass, that as many as came to the place where Asahel fell down and died, stood still."

The next period of David's reign was occupied with foreign wars. He subdued the Edomites, a powerful people descended from Esau: and the Philistines, a Canaanitish tribe which still retained an extensive territory, stretching along the shore of the Mediterranean sea. These were the most warlike and inveterate enemies of the Jews. He also conquered all the hostile nations to the East of the Jordan, till his dominions extended from the Euphrates to the Mediterranean, and from Lebanon to the Red Sea. So far his progress had been prosperous and glorious. The remainder of his life was clouded by domestic affliction and humiliation. These were brought on by the flagitious conduct of his own family, particularly of his beloved son Absalom. His scandalous and atrocious behaviour obliged his father to banish him from his presence and from the city. At length by the intercession of Joab he was permitted to return to Jerusalem, but not to appear at court. Upon this he began to alienate the affections of the people

from his father, and to seduce them from their loyalty. These attempts were favoured by the extraordinary beauty of his person, and the splendour of his external appearance and equipage; and he courted popularity by the customary arts of ambitious men, courtesy and condescension, sympathy for their wrongs, with commiseration of their sufferings and promises of redress. "He rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate" where the courts of justice sat. "And it was so, that when any man that had a controversy came to the king for judgment, then Absalom called unto him, and said, Of what city art thou? And he said, Thy servant is of one of the tribes of Israel. Absalom said unto him, See, thy matters are good and right, but there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee: oh! that I were made judge in the land; that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice. And when any man came nigh to him to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him, and in this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment; so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel."

In such cases the higher orders usually fall in with the current. The courtiers, sensible that every year brings the heir apparent nearer to the throne, and the aged monarch to the grave, worship the rising sun. Thus David, finding himself no longer safe from the machinations of Absalom, abandoned his capital. "Arise," said he to his servants, "and let us flee; for we shall not else escape from Absalom: make speed to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly, and bring evil upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword. And the king went forth, and all his household after him, and all his servants and guards passed on before the king. And all the people wept with a loud voice. The king himself passed over the brook Kedron, and toward the way of the wilderness. And the king said to Zadok, Carry back the ark of God into the city: if I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and shew me both it and his habitation. But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold, here am I; let him do to me as seemeth good unto him. And David went up by the ascent of mount Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and he went barefoot: and all the people that was with him covered

every man his head; and they went, weeping as they went up, and when David was come to the top of the mount he worshipped God." He then pursued his journey till he passed the Jordan, to take refuge in the provinces to the east of that river, which were least under the influence of Absalom. There he was able to collect and organize an army before he was overtaken. On the approach of the enemy, the aged king intended to command in person, but was dissuaded from this by Joab, who commanded in his stead. As the army issued from the city, "the king commanded Joab and Abishai, and Ittai, saying, Deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Absalom: And all the people heard when the king give all the captains charge concerning Absalom." After the defeat of his army, Absalom in his flight, "rode upon a mule; and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught hold of the oak, and he was taken up between the heaven and the earth, and the mule that was under him went away, and a certain man saw it, and he told Joab, and said, Behold, I saw Absalom hanged in an oak. And Joab said, why didst thou not smite him then to the ground? and I would have given thee ten shekels of silver, and a girdle. Then Joab took three darts in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of Absalom, while he was yet alive in the midst of the oak," notwithstanding his beauty and his helpless condition, their former intimacy and the injunction of his father. "And they took Absalom and cast him into a great pit in the wood, and laid a very great heap of stones upon him; and all Israel fled every one to his tent." Meanwhile the king being informed of the death of his son, "went up to the chamber over the gate and wept; and as he went thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son! And the people gat them by stealth that day into the city, as people being ashamed steal away when they flee in battle; the king covered his face, and cried with a loud voice, O my son Absalom; O Absalom, my son, my son!" After this cruel and atrocious deed Joab repaired to the presence of David, not to excuse or apologise for what he had done, not to console and condole with the aged king for the loss of his beloved child, but rudely to upbraid him for his unseasonable grief. "He came into the

house to the king, and said, Thou hast shamed this day the faces of all thy servants which this day have saved thy life, and the lives of thy sons and of thy daughters, and the lives of thy wives. In that thou lovest thine enemies, and hatest thy friends, for thou hast declared this day that thou regardest neither princes nor servants; for I perceive that if Absalom had lived, and all we had died, then it had pleased thee well. Then the king arose and sat in the gate; and they told unto all the people saying, Behold the king doth sit in the gate. And all the people came before the king; for all Israel had fled, every man to his tent."

After this decisive battle, the people of Israel and Judah united in recalling the king. Though David had repressed his resentment at the conduct of Joab, he had not forgiven him, but shewed his displeasure by depriving him of his command, and substituting Amasa the captain of Absalom's troops in his room. This affront was not to be pardoned by Joab, he accordingly seized an opportunity of assassinating Amasa. "He took him by the beard with the right hand to kiss him. But Amasa took no heed of the sword which Joab had let fall out of the scabbard as if by accident, and which was then in his hand: so he smote him therewith, in the fifth rib, so that he died." This was the third atrocious assassination, committed by this cruel and unfeeling man, yet he had attained to such influence and power that he resumed the command of the army. David on another occasion expressed his detestation of him and Abishai in these emphatic terms. "What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah," though she was his own sister. Joab's taking Amasa by the beard to kiss him seems designed to express his taking his beard to kiss it, a custom which still prevails among the eastern nations. David on his deathbed gave it in charge to Solomon to do justice on that bloody assassin.

During his flight from Jerusalem, David experienced sympathy and commiseration from all but Shimei. He was a Benjamite of the tribe and family of Saul; his antipathy to David had neither been extinguished by lapse of time, nor mitigated by the kindness and moderation of David, but was kept alive in full vigour by an angry temper and a vindictive spirit. "And when king David came to Bahurim, behold, there came out a man of the family of the house of Saul, whose name was

Shimei; he came forth and cursed still as he came. And he cast stones at David, and at all the servants of king David; and all the people, and all the mighty men who were on his right hand and on his left. And thus said Shimei when he cursed, Come out, come out, thou bloody man, and thou man of Belial: The Lord hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned; and behold, thou art taken in thy mischief, because thou art a bloody man." This outrageous insult only gave David an occasion to display the feelings of a generous mind softened by misfortune. For when Abishai solicited leave to take vengeance on Shimei, saying, "Why should this dead dog curse my Lord the king? let me go over, I pray thee, and cut off his head." David replied, "Let him curse; because the Lord hath said unto him, curse David. Who shall then say, Wherefore hast thou done so? And David said to Abishai, and to all his servants, Behold, my son, which came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life: how much more now may this Benjamite do it? Let him alone and let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him. It may be that the Lord will look upon mine affliction, and that the Lord will requite good for his cursing this day; and as David and his men went by the way, Shimei went along on the hill's side over against him, and cursed as he went, and threw stones at him, and cast dust." David still suffered him to go on till he was weary, knowing that contempt is the wisest treatment and the severest punishment for a man of his character. That the mildness of David was not merely the effect of humiliation and depression of spirit, appeared from his conduct to this man on his return after his victory; for "as he was re-passing the river Jordan, Shimei fell down before him. And said unto the king, Let not my Lord impute iniquity unto me; neither do thou remember that which thy servant did perversely the day that my Lord the king went out of Jerusalem, that the king should take it to his heart: for thy servant doth know that I have sinned; therefore, behold, I am come the first this day of all the house of Joseph, to go down to meet my Lord the king. But Abishai said again, Shall not Shimei be put to death, because he cursed the Lord's anointed? And David said, shall there be any man put to death this day in Israel? for do not I know that I am this day king over Israel? There-

fore the king said unto Shimei, thou shalt not die. And the king sware unto him." Thus his fruitless rage was followed as it generally is, by a servile humiliation, and served only to enhance the mercy and moderation of the person whom he had insulted.

It was once the lot of David to meet with another man of a character similar to that of Shimei. When, persecuted by Saul, he retired to the secrecy and protection of the wilderness, he found frequent occasions to do kind offices to Nabal, by protecting his property from the licentiousness of his own followers, and the rapine of the freebooters, who infested the country. Being once in want of provisions for his men, he sent a courteous letter to Nabal, requesting him to supply him with some of the produce of his farm. But he said, "Who is David? or who is the son of Jesse? There are many servants now-a-days that break away every man from his master." Now, if Abigail his wife had not exemplified how easily a soft answer will expel wrath from a generous breast, and shewn the value of a mild word spoken in good season, David would have wreaked his vengeance in a most exemplary manner upon the person and family of Nabal, for his ingratitude and for this absurd effusion of passion. This churl is well described by his own servants as "such a son of Belial that a man could not speak to him." But in one respect he differed from Shimei. Shimei indulged his irascible propensity for no beneficial purpose, and even to his own great peril, but Nabal made his passion subservient to his avarice. "Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men whom I know not whence they be?" He, however, had the good fortune to be blessed with a prudent and amiable wife. When, therefore, Abigail heard of her husband's intemperate behaviour, she made haste and took two hundred loaves, and two bottles of wine, and five sheep ready-dressed, and five measures of parched corn and an hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on asses, and proceeded to meet David. But she told not her husband Nabal." The eloquent address with which she appeased the anger of David was closed with an argument well deserving the consideration of every man addicted to passion. "And it shall come to pass when the Lord shall have done to my lord according to all the good that

he hath spoken concerning thee, that this shall be no grief unto thee, nor offence of heart unto my lord, that thou hast shed blood causeless, or that my lord hath avenged himself." This speech from the mouth of "a woman of a good understanding and a beautiful countenance" was not lost upon the generous and sensitive heart of David, and he replied, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me. So David received of her hand that which she had brought him, and said unto her, Go up in peace to thine house; see, I have hearkened to thy voice, and have accepted thy person." This elegant narration, which abounds with beautiful strokes of character and interesting incidents, was speedily brought to a happy conclusion. Nabal was so terrified by Abigail's report, "that his heart died within him and he became as a stone. So that after ten days he died." When David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, "Blessed be the Lord, that hath kept his servant from evil. And David sent and communed with Abigail, to take her to him to wife. And when the servants of David were come to Abigail, to Carmel, they spake unto her, saying, David sent us unto thee, to take thee to him to wife: and she arose, and bowed herself on her face to the earth, and said, Behold let thine handmaid be a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my Lord: and Abigail hasted, and arose, and rode upon an ass, with five damsels of hers that went after her, and became David's wife."

It is not without reason, that Scripture so often reminds us of the guilt of anger, and warns us against the consequences of giving way to an irascible temper. This irritable habit of the Soul operates like insanity, but the few lucid intervals which the patient enjoys, are not blessed with an ignorance and unconsciousness of what has passed, but cursed with the most bitter anguish and remorse. So that he suffers the misery of a lunatic, without enjoying his intervals of ease, and the remorse of a sinner without deriving any pleasure or profit from his sins. The same circumstances make a man addicted to anger an object of contempt and ridicule; for what can be more ludicrous than to see one, who ought to sustain a grave and respectable character, suddenly thrown into a fit of passion by some trivial accident? Yet this is what the passionate man is exposed to every hour. You shall see him suddenly using

the gestures and expressions of a madman, without expecting to gain either profit or reputation by these extravagances. While the by-standers are highly entertained by this absurd exhibition, his breast is disturbed by a concourse of tumultuous passions, and his mouth is continually uttering the most tragical expressions, that any lamentable occasion could call for. This propensity is a source, not only of disquiet and contempt, but also of sin; for it is our duty to govern our hearts, and regulate our thoughts as well as our actions; and the indulgence of such unsocial and outrageous passions as haunt the breast of him that is given to wrath, cannot be innocent. These passions are also incompatible with the purity and tranquillity of sincere devotion, with that brotherly love which we owe to all men, and with that discipline which we are commanded to exercise over our own hearts. So that the passionate man violates, even by his thoughts, his duty to God, to his neighbour, and to his own soul. But in his actions he is chargeable with a higher degree of guilt. Almost every action that proceeds from an angry spirit is sinful, and they all may be so. Anger continually impels to mischief; it continually urges the person that encourages it to injure some one or other of his neighbours. It is not possible that any should be benefitted by its suggestions. Some vices are productive of accidental good to others; but anger is a source of unmixed evil. Now since every amiable and virtuous principle of our nature, every circumstance in our condition, and every doctrine of religion prompt us to love our neighbour, and to alleviate the sorrows of this state of pilgrimage, and even to return good for evil, it becomes evident that anger, which contradicts this rule of duty in every instance, must be a very criminal propensity. Thus it appears, that almost every action that proceeds from an angry spirit is sinful. But a little reflection will also convince us that they all may be so; for the agent has no power over his conduct. No action can be good that is suggested by rage and fury, that is, by a desire to do mischief.

Some may object to this, that a propensity to anger cannot be culpable, because it does not proceed from the will, but is part of our nature. The most effectual answer to this argument is, that it proves too much; for it will vindicate the indulgence of every passion, and therefore, by countenancing a conclusion that is mani-

festly false, it impeaches its own truth. Besides, it is founded on that poverty of argument that begs the question which it ought to prove. It is true, that resentment is implanted in every man's breast, as a safeguard against violence, but it is denied that the habitual and violent excess of this passion, which is implied in the phrase, a passionate man, constitutes any part of human nature. And when it grows to this excess, its growth may generally be ascribed either to criminal negligence or voluntary indulgence. It may also be admitted, that some men are born with a more irascible temper than others; but surely the conclusion to be deduced from this is, not that they are at liberty to increase this defect, or that it is prudent to nurse the disease, but the very contrary. If they inherited any infirmity or obstinate distemper, they would submit to the severest discipline, necessary for the removal of this defect, and to any regimen, that promised a deliverance from the disorder, and would call in the assistance of every person who could afford them relief. But when the disease or defect is of a mental kind, they plead its inveteracy and violence as an excuse for neglecting any attempt at a cure: they acquiesce in the pain, and even encourage the progress of the distemper.

Anger is also to be considered in reference to its object; this must be a superior, an inferior, or an equal. A man, how much soever given to anger, must see the folly and imprudence of provoking one who is able to chastise him for his insolence, and to whom he must be indebted for clemency and forbearance. When the object is his inferior, he must be sensible how mean and cowardly it is to let loose his fury against one that is unable to resist, and who ought therefore to be an object of his clemency and forbearance. When the parties in any contest are equals, it is evident that he who preserves his presence of mind and self-command will so far have the advantage, and that he who suffers himself to be thrown into a rage and put off his guard, gives a decided and irrecoverable advantage to his antagonist.

The latter end of David's reign was troubled by another rebellion in his own family. Adonijah, his eldest son, knowing that David had destined Solomon the son of Bathsheba to the throne, in opposition to an express law of Moses, (Deut. xxi. 15,) attempted unsuccessfully to frustrate his father's intentions.

On his death-bed he gave an excellent charge to Solomon : but his directions to put Joab and Shimei to death partook too much of the spirit of oriental tyranny, and ill accorded with his generous, forgiving, and heroic character. But these were in some degree compensated by his recommendation to show "kindness to the sons of Barzillai. Let them, says he, be of those that eat at thy table, for so they came to me when I fled because of Absalom thy brother." "So David died in a good old age, full of days, riches, and honour, and was buried in the city of David." He was a politic and heroic prince, and a signal instrument of Providence in establishing and extending the Jewish monarchy. As a devotional poet he stands unrivalled, and ranks in the highest choir of sublime and pathetic bards.

As to his moral character, we have the testimony of the sacred historian, who could make allowance for the manners of the age and nation in which he lived, that "he did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and turned not aside from any thing that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite." But it was to his religious character, his piety and zeal for the true religion, and his freedom from any taint of idolatry, that he was indebted for the illustrious title of "THE MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART."

ERASMUS.

COMMENTARY ON HEBREWS.

CHAPTER I, VERSE 8.

"But unto the Son *he saith*, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever."

THE Apostle, in this chapter, is representing to us the superior eminence of Christ as a divine teacher, or messenger, to all who preceded him. For the benefit of my readers, I shall transcribe the passage in full : v. 1—8. "God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds ; who, being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high ; being made so

much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? And again, when he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, and let all the angels of God worship him. And of the angels, he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son, *he saith*, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever."

Now I would ask, in opposition to Trinitarians, who infer from these words the *Deity of Christ*:—is not *God* clearly pointed out as the Great Almighty Being, by whose agency all that is here recorded has been brought to pass? Who is it, that "in time past spake unto the fathers by the prophets?" The Apostle answers for us,—*God*. Who is it, that "in these last days hath spoken unto us by his Son?" His reply is the same,—*God*. By whom has Christ "been appointed heir of all things?" By *the Supreme Jehovah*. "By whom also he made the worlds," or more properly *constituted the Ages*. Who "made the worlds?" *God*. Is not the eternal and omnipotent Jehovah distinctly represented here, as speaking and acting by his absolute will and authority? And are not the other characters mentioned, as unquestionably described to be *inferior*, or as the instruments and agents by which he fulfils his wise and gracious purposes? V. 3. "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, when he had by himself purged our sins, *sat down on the right hand*"—of whom? Of *God*, who alone is strictly and truly called "*the Majesty on high*." I put another question to Trinitarians on this head, which if they answer satisfactorily, they are entitled to a patent for solving paradoxes! Independently of the impiety of the supposition, that the Almighty, whose spirit fills the Universe, could, accurately speaking, "*sit down*," or assume a *definite position*, in regard to place, in contradiction to the reality of his Omnipresence, and to the exclusion of the wide and boundless range of the rest of his dominion;—and taking this language of the Apostle literally, which is merely used in accommodation to human views and capacities, I ask, if Christ was really God, did he, when he ascended to Heaven,

“sit down *on the right hand of himself*?” And does he sit *on* the throne, and *beside* the throne at the same time? V. 4, “Being *made so much better* than the angels, as he hath *by inheritance obtained a more excellent name* than they.” Is God merely by a *step of gradation* higher or “better” than the angels? And was he “made” such, or advanced to this rank by a power *superior to Himself*? Is he not by his very nature and existence, from all eternity, possessed of the highest possible perfection, and infinitely exalted above the most elevated conceptions that we can form of his character? Let the Scriptures answer. Job xi. 7. “Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?” Ps. lxxxix. 6-8. “Who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord? who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord? O Lord God of hosts, who is a strong Lord like unto thee? or to thy faithfulness round about thee?” Ps. lxxxiii. 18. “That men may know that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth.”

V. 5. “For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?” Who said? *God*. “And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son.” Who is it that asserts the right, and chooses to be to him a Father? *God*. V. 6. “And again, when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.” God might *order* and *allow* this *homage* or *mark of respect* to be paid to his Son by *inferior beings* without derogating in the least from his own glory: but who could confer such a mark of honour on *God himself*? Now, I would revert to what we have recorded in the foregoing quotations respecting Jesus Christ, and inquire, with what degree of consistency or regard to common sense, we can apply the same language to the Almighty God? How it is possible for Him “*to be appointed heir of all things*,” or *by whom* he should be appointed;—What they understand by God “*sitting down on the right hand of the Majesty on high*,” that is, on *his own* right hand; in what sense or signification the title “*first begotten*,” or the assertion “*being made so much better than the angels, as he hath, by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they*,” can be attributed to *Him* who is the

Sovereign Lord and Creator of all things both in heaven and on earth, I leave Trinitarians, who have a greater facility in reconciling contradictions and impossibilities, to determine!

V. 8. "But unto the Son, he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." This is the only clause in the whole passage, which they can adduce, bearing even a seeming approach to evidence in their favour: but it will also be found destitute of validity. The original Greek will admit of a different translation, perhaps more allied to truth:—"God is thy throne for ever and ever." But for the satisfaction of Trinitarians and ourselves, we adhere to the present version. There are evidently, then, *two parties* implied in this announcement—the one as addressing the other. And it is plain, that the *person addressing* is precedent in authority to the *person addressed*. "But unto the Son, he saith,"—who saith? The *Supreme God* saith unto the Son, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." Now, it is very extraordinary, if God should make this declaration to *Himself*! On the supposed truth of the Trinitarian interpretation, however, this most glaring absurdity must follow as a natural consequence. Christ being here addressed, as Trinitarians will willingly admit, in his "*divine nature*;" and being, according to them, in his "*divine nature*" *God*, the result which I have stated, is obvious and unavoidable. So that instead of the accurate and intelligible line of distinction, which the Apostle observes throughout the whole of his narration between the Father and the Son,—the "*Son*" is converted into the "*Father*;" and the reading becomes, "unto the *Father* he saith,—that is, *the Father* saith unto *the Father*, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever!" Thus is the whole sense of the passage buried and lost in the mysterious labyrinths of an unscriptural and inexplicable doctrine!

If we examine Psalm xlv. 6, 7, we shall find *the very same words* applied to an earthly potentate—to Solomon. Was Solomon, therefore, "*equal with God*?" Will Trinitarians be candid enough to adhere to the same standard of interpretation in the same instance, as in the passage under review? In consistency they are bound to do so; but the manifest impiety to which it would lead, forbids them. This, among other similar facts, exhibits in a striking manner, with what extra-

ordinary agility Trinitarians can overleap the greatest obstacles with which their creed is surrounded,—with how much complacency they can bear to behold its worst deformities exposed,—and with what perfect indifference they can reconcile themselves to its most palpable errors and inconsistencies, so that they have the luxury in reserve, of quietly retreating from the harassing missiles and arguments of their polemical opponents, to the enjoyment of *the little ideal heaven* which they have formed within their own breasts, from a fancied belief in its latent virtue and soul-saving efficacy !

We observe, then, that these words when applied to Christ, are no more demonstrative of *Deity*, than when applied to Solomon ; but are merely employed by way of distinction, denoting the superior rank and dignity of his office as the Messiah, and the lasting and durable foundation of his kingdom. God might address his “ Son ” by whatever title he thought proper. Jesus Christ is entitled to the appellation of “ Immanuel ” or *God* in a *Subordinate sense*, as according to the idiom of the Jewish language, “ there be Gods many and Lords many ; but to us there is but *one God, the Father.* ” God had also “ appointed him heir of all things ” in relation to the church, over which he was to preside. He had bestowed on him a kingdom and a throne : and he may have intended to have given a superior sanction to Christ’s government in the eyes of angels and of men, by designating him by this title. So that we have no right to question the propriety of this address of God to the Messiah :—and Trinitarians have equally little grounds for deducing from it, the equality of Christ with the Father. Let them only read, however, the succeeding verse, and there they will find the fine fabric which they have erected on this passage, in support of their doctrine, levelled to the ground :—v. 9, “ Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity ; therefore, God, **EVEN THY GOD**, hath *anointed thee* with the oil of gladness above *thy fellows.* ” If the apostle intended to teach the *Deity of Christ* in the text preceding, he has, by this, directly and manifestly contradicted himself. I ask, if the inspired writer had believed Christ to be the Supreme Jehovah, would he, in violation of every rational sentiment, have applied to him such language ? Would he have so freely underrated his attributes, or have introduced him to our view under this

humiliating comparison? Would he, who was a Jew by birth, have so lightly spoken of the God of his Fathers?" I answer, not. Such a supposition casts a slander of impiety on the character of the apostle, of which it is not possible that he could be guilty. Has God *any "fellows?"* Has He *any equals?* Isaiah xl. 18, "To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him? Was there *any God* who could be *his God?* *Any superior*, by whom *He* could be "anointed?" But it is unnecessary to make further comment on these words: they speak trumpet-tongued. One thing is worthy of observation, that the more we read and study Scripture, we find its harmony the more apparent; and, though we may momentarily attach a doubtful meaning to an isolated passage or phrase, that the sacred writers invariably explain themselves, and convince us more and more of *their consistent and rigid Unitarianism.* J. C.

ON PEACE IN BELIEVING,

AS INCULCATED IN THE BELFAST MONTHLY VISITOR.

FROM the extraordinary methods which have been invented to get rid in fore-taste of the effects of iniquity, one, who would take the opinions of churches for his recipe, might suppose that Christ, instead of coming to *put away sin*, came to encourage it. To justify this supposition, many modes of quackery might be adduced, which, so far from curing the patients, render the advice of the physician more necessary than ever. A sinner who is obliged to do penance by abstaining from the most agreeable food, or by travelling miles on rugged paths on his bare knees, may be restrained from a repetition of his crimes. But where a mere act of *credulity* will answer for *repentance*, he would be very stupid indeed, were he not to believe in every nostrum which his priest should administer. The following paragraphs, as contained in the 14th number of the *Belfast Monthly Visitor*, will shew that these remarks are not made without evidence.

PEACE IN BELIEVING.

"Jesus said unto her. I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."—JOHN xi. 25.

In 1817, I visited a mason who had been grievously injured by a fall. He had been a very profligate character; and the conviction of his guilt, the fear of God's wrath, and the dread of approach-

ing judgment, seemed to absorb every feeling of his heart. He had been trying to make his peace with God, but he felt wholly unable to do so. He had made many resolutions to lead a different life ; but he felt again, that he should never rise from his bed, and that these promises would be of no avail.

I explained to him, that while he did not go to the Lord Jesus Christ for pardon, he was setting about the work of making his peace with God in a very false way ; that all his resolutions of amendment in his external conduct were in vain, without the aids of Divine grace ; that if he could put them fully into practice, they would be of no avail to give peace to his conscience, or salvation to his soul.

I illustrated this in various ways ; among the rest, I asked him whether, if he owed a debt of a thousand pounds, he would be able, in his present state, to raise the money to pay it. He replied, he could not. I asked him if he would not be greatly alarmed if he thought his creditor were coming to throw him into prison ? He replied, that he should. I asked him, if some rich man were to come in, and tell him he had paid the debt, it would not relieve him from the fear of his creditor, and of the prison ; and give him consolation and joy. He replied, it would. Such, I showed him was his state : that the effort to appease the wrath of his offended God, by any righteousness of his own, would be as vain as those of a poor, bed-ridden pauper, to pay a debt of a thousand pounds. But I said, the Lord Jesus Christ is this kind, rich Friend, who has paid the debt for those who believe in him, and who could never hope to discharge it themselves ; that he has by his righteousness fulfilled the broken law of God : that he has, by his death upon the cross, stood in our place, and borne our curse ; and that the message which he has commanded his ministers to proclaim to sinners, is a message of free and full pardon ; that, instead of vainly attempting to work out a righteousness of their own, they should "look unto Him, and be saved." Therefore I came to him with these "good tidings of great joy ;" that though he had been wicked and vile, yet the gospel declares, that "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin ;" that "though our sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow."

The poor man listened to me with deep anxiety, but I could not perceive that he seemed either fully to understand me, or to receive consolation. I kneeled with him, and prayed that the Holy Spirit would teach him to understand, and to rest upon this hope set before him.

Next day I found him in the same state of mind. I endeavoured to set the same hope again before him, as plainly and simply as I could, I prayed with him again, but again left him without any perceptible change in his feelings.

The third day his countenance wore the same mournful appearance. But on the fourth morning, as soon as I opened the door of his room, a very different scene presented itself. He seemed to have been waiting with anxiety ; his countenance was brightened with a smile of peace, and hope, and joy, and he cried out as soon as he saw me, "O, sir, now I understand all you have been saying to me ; when I was thinking over it this morning, it came into my

mind at once—If Jesus has died for us, if he has paid the whole of our debt, then we have not to pay it ourselves—we may depend on him, and rejoice.”

“Yes,” said I, “that is, indeed, the glorious truth of the gospel; he has paid it all, and we have not to pay it. We may rest on him and be at peace.”

I then read the fifth chapter of Romans: “Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

“Oh yes, sir,” said he, “that’s true: now I understand it.”

I went on—“By whom also we have access, by faith, into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”

“O yes, sir, that’s true; we do rejoice, sir, and so we may, since He has paid our debt, and done all for us.”

Here is a daring perversion of Christianity, which has been industriously sent into the cabins of the poor, and which is made at the expense of God’s *mercy*, Christ’s *obedience*, and man’s *holiness*. The doctrine held out may be very consoling to the thief at the gallows in our age, as a drowning man will catch at straws; but I fear it will not do for an entrance into another world. Were I acquainted with the author, I would ask him, “who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?” Who is this that is cutting up by the roots the doctrines of repentance, reformation, and amendment; and contriving a scheme by which men may confidently contract debts, from a blind persuasion that other persons will pay them? Such a man may be in his own estimation a great theologian; and with *his creed* in the one hand, and *his sword* in the other, may give you the choice of *conversion or death*; but I do solemnly declare, that I would not engage him for any consideration, as the companion or tutor of my children. His theory is full of danger to the young and ignorant. It is a corruption which, like some others, is calculated to give infidels an opportunity of venting their sneers against the Gospel. But, thank heaven, the Gospel teaches no such theory, as that comprised in this number of the *Visitor*! The very words of Scripture are garbled to make out the story, as may appear by reading 1 John 1st chapter, from which the principal quotation is made. Instead of the *wrath* of God, as taught in the *Visitor*, we there read “that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.” Instead of God being, as he is represented, an *austere creditor*, who must have all debts paid, we there read, that “if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to *forgive* us our

sins." But if the Calvinistic doctrines be true, that "a debt can never be *forgiven* which is *paid*," this chapter and the whole of the Gospel must be false. If *paid*, it cannot be *forgiven*; and *vice versa*, if *forgiven*, it cannot be *paid*. And if God will not forgive without a satisfaction, neither should man, "who is taught by Christ to pray to the Father,"—"forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." This, however, is no new doctrine, which is taught in the *Visitor*; for, to rob the Father of the universe of the power and will to forgive his creatures is as old as the dark ages, though a plain christian might suppose, that the power which enforces a law, possesses a right to mitigate the punishment. Though the scriptures plainly teach, that "the Lord, the Lord God, is merciful and gracious, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin:—and that "he (the man) that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are an abomination to the Lord;" yet the extraordinary plan of administration has been invented, which exhibits God as unable to pardon sinners, and as inflicting the punishment due to the *guilty* upon the *innocent*, in order to vindicate his *justice*!

When the writer in the *Visitor* quotes the phrase, "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin," he surely does not mean to teach that *blood literally*, which is *crimson matter*, will cleanse men from all sin. It evidently means the whole doctrines of Christ, as taught by himself and his apostles, and as containing faith neither only nor alone in his person, blood, and death, but in all the doctrines and duties enjoined in his religion. For to represent the whole of the Christian religion by one term, is no uncommon thing with the apostles.

The *illustration* employed in the *Visitor* to inculcate the christian system, is a gross distortion of the Gospel dispensation; a dispensation, not of purchase but of free grace, not of merit but of mercy. Suppose then, reader, that *you owed me* a debt of a thousand pounds, and that in my wrath I was about to cast you into prison, knowing that you were unable to pay it, but that during the proceedings a *third* person came forward and paid the money to me to save you from prison, what *love* could you feel towards *me* for my behaviour? You might hate me, but you could owe me no gratitude. And if

the third person would indulge you thus, time after time; to draw upon his generosity, might you not become both careless and extravagant? Might you not be encouraged "to continue in sin that grace might abound?" It is thus, if the illustration in the *Visitor* were correct, that sinners might be prompted to hate God, who is introduced as an unfeeling creditor, demanding the uttermost farthing, even from paupers; and that they might be tempted, not to repent, but to get deeper and deeper into iniquity, persuaded that by trusting to the righteousness of others, all their debts would be paid. But the Gospel teaches no such doctrine;—nor will the writer in the *Visitor* dare to say,—(but there is nothing too absurd for some people,)—that a man, pleading poverty, while he is carelessly contracting debts, or retaining plunder in his possession, while he is calculating on salvation by some great effort of faith, can safely hope for forgiveness in the one case, or for happiness in the other. He can *merit* nothing, I grant, but he must possess the *capacity* for happiness ere he can enjoy happiness; and that capacity he can never possess while he lives careless in sin; nor can his repentance ever avail, until he restores the ill-gotten goods.

Suppose now, reader, that *you* owed *me* a debt of a thousand pounds, and that, in consequence of your inability to discharge it, you became unhappy, and that, under these circumstances, I sent my son to you to say,—my father desired me to inform you, that he knows you are not able to pay the debt which you owe to him, but that he will forgive you if you are frugal and industrious for the time to come,—how would your heart glow with *love to me for my forgiveness, with gratitude to my Son for his kindness in bringing the good news, and with resolutions of future economy and amendment, in fulfilment of your duty?* These are very different characters, in which to bring forward the parties, from those in which they make their entrance and departure in the *Visitor*. If this be not the way in which they are uniformly introduced in the Gospel, then words can be no longer trusted as conveyors of thought. "All things are of God, who hath reconciled *us* to himself, (not himself to us,) *by* Jesus Christ." "Eternal life is the gift of God, *through* our Lord Jesus Christ." Such is the doctrine of the New Testament, in which God is represented as *freely forgiving* the penitent, and in which Christ is

represented as the being *through* whom he dispenses pardons.

The prodigal son made no satisfaction, but that of *repentance*, and he was frankly received. In the parable of the king which took account of his servants, God is described as *forgiving* the debt of a certain contrite servant; who is afterwards condemned for his want of compassion towards his fellow-servant; forgetting to be merciful as God is merciful. I would seriously recommend the author of the 14th number of the *Visitor* to read his Bible, to quit his human creeds, and to give in future such *illustrations* of God's dealings with the children of men, as may not tempt them to *hate* him as an *unfeeling creditor*, nor encourage them in sin, by trusting for peace engendered by *extreme unctions and fabulous illustrations*. The Apostle James teaches,—“but wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead.” And the Master of James teaches,—“not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven.” The case of the thief on the cross, who for the *first time* had heard of eternal life, has no resemblance to the situation of a man, who is born and brought up under the light of the Gospel. THEOPHILUS.

November 26th, 1833.

THE END OF THE YEAR.

THE year is now drawing to a close. In a few days it will come to its natural end, and in a few more its name will cease to be heard. As I have been accustomed when I draw my curtain at night to review the incidents of the preceding day, “commune with my own heart upon my bed and be still,” so I think the same respect due to this longer portion of my time, and I invite my readers to share in my meditations.

There are certain periods in our lives, which admonish us to review the portion of life which is past, and lay down an improved plan of conduct for the time to come. Among these the commencement and the close of the year are conspicuous. They are stages in our journey at which we should halt, to consider what progress we have made, what time we have lost, how much we have deviated from the straight road, and how we may rectify

our errors or improve by our experience. Let us then review the year which is drawing to a conclusion, with respect to the conduct of God to us, and ours to him.

A minute or even a superficial examination of the manner in which we have been treated by Providence, would imply the enumeration of a greater number of particulars than could be crowded into this paper: but a general consideration of the principal relations in which we stand will suffice to excite that sentiment of gratitude which we should feel. Let us reflect upon the blessings which we have experienced as inhabitants of this highly favoured country, upon the continuance and improvement of our free constitution, with the mild and equitable administration of public affairs, the uninterrupted enjoyment of peace and personal freedom, the continued benignity of our mild and tranquil climate, and that abundance of provisions which has enabled us to supply the wants of other nations, and added to our own prosperity, and to our hopes of future plenty.

Thus have we taken a glance at the absolute marks of divine bounty, with which this year has been crowned. Our convictions on this subject will not be shaken, nor our feelings blunted by a comparative view of the same circumstances. Let us then confirm the encomium which I have passed upon the positive happiness which we have derived from the favour of God in the course of this year, by a relative view of our condition and that of others. While other nations in different quarters of the world have been exhausted by hazardous and bloody wars, or distracted by internal convulsions, while the inhabitants of those countries have been called upon to deplore the loss of fortune, family, and friends, we have been mercifully preserved from such calamities, "He who stilleth the voice of the sea, the fury of their waves, and the tumult of the people," hath blessed us with tranquillity and with an exuberance of the fruits of the earth.

Let individuals compare their own circumstances with those of others, and they will find ample room for thanksgiving and praise. How few are those who can look down upon them with contempt, compared with those who look up to them with envy! How many Christians are there in different regions of the earth of whom the world is not worthy, who even now wander in deserts and mountains, who are constrained to worship "in dens

and caves of the earth," or bow and tremble under the iron sceptre of spiritual oppression! What would not they give for that religious security, for those spiritual comforts, for which, through long habit and frequent repetition, many of us have lost our relish!

In domestic relations, how many have retained throughout the year the numerous comforts, which they possessed at its commencement! How many more have even encreased the number of their enjoyments and the value of their possessions! How numerous are the unexpected escapes from calamity, which demand our grateful acknowledgement! How few are those who have suffered any afflicting strokes; and of those who have, how many still retain a greater variety of blessings than the generality of their brethren! Let them consider how greatly their sufferings would be embittered by that load of penury and contempt, hunger, cold, nakedness, and hopeless toil, by which millions of their fellow-creatures are every day weighed down to the earth, a burden from which they are relieved by the peculiar felicity of their situation. Let them think how insignificant their sufferings, how unwarrantable their lamentations or murmurs would appear to wretches, of whose misery, such losses or disappointments as theirs would make but an inconsiderable part. Let them recollect that they are still surrounded with the comforts and accommodations of which others are destitute; that though afflicted, they are in a situation which permits them to indulge their grief; that they are encircled with kind friends and dear relatives, prepared to render assistance, or to sympathize and condole with them in their sorrows. Let them call these things to mind, and confess, that if the Lord has bruised them, his hands have bound up their sores; if he hath wounded, he hath also made them whole, and crowned their years with goodness.

There is another subject of thankfulness in which we can all join, that by the help and indulgence of the Almighty we continue unto this day. While multitudes have been carried away in the vigour of youth, in the dawn of reflection, in the budding of their hopes, or in the enjoyment of those earthly comforts, for which they had strenuously and assiduously toiled, we have been spared to enjoy our temporal gifts, and to profit by our means of grace. Their everlasting destiny has

been sealed; ours is still open. Their lot is already drawn; ours is still in the urn. They are precluded from further repentance or amendment; we are permitted to profit by their examples, to avoid their sins, or to imitate their virtues.

Upon these tender points it is impossible to touch, without turning the attention of individuals to numerous instances of mortality which have taken place within the year. But it affords a solid and delightful theme of consolation when our regret has not been heightened by apprehensions for their future fate. It rather resembles the sensation which we feel when a friend departs for a distant country, to take possession of a valuable inheritance. Slight and transient should be our sorrow when we mourn only for ourselves.

But it is time to pass from these thoughts, however solemn and affecting, to more useful and practical considerations. Having inquired into the conduct of God to us, let us compare it with our conduct to him, and ascertain, if indeed it can admit of doubt, which party has most reason to complain. This is a point which may be freely left to every man's own determination. Instead, therefore, of proceeding to point out and demonstrate those continual transgressions with which we are all chargeable, and which no man denies, but he that has most reason to confess them, I shall only suggest a few interrogatories, which every one will answer according to his feelings. Have you felt and cherished that solemn and fervent devotion which is due to the Almighty from his creatures, in every circumstance of their existence, prosperous or adverse? Have you cultivated and expressed in the public assemblies of the people, the gratitude which you owe to him for life and its various blessings, to which your sufferings have been but rare and brief interruptions; for your manifold advantages as members of society, as disciples of Christ, as connected in families, and as individuals? Have you submitted to every appointment of his providence, with that patience, that cheerful resignation, that implicit confidence in his wisdom and goodness, which are due to him, who never afflicteth us but for our good, or for some more important end? Have you duly improved, even to your own satisfaction, your various gifts, opportunities, mercies, and corrections? When you have been admonished by the divine chastise-

ments, have you repented of your sins, amended your lives, and been taught by adversity to sympathize with the miserable? Consider how large a portion of our rational, moral, and religious life is comprised in a year, and say whether you are now so much better as you have lived longer, and as the time you have to live is shortened? Reflect whether you are now prepared for an everlasting change of condition; whether you are fit to depart when God shall call you; or if not now, when you will: and whether you will be able to answer this question in a more satisfactory manner at the close of the next year, if you be spared so long?

Recollect the manner in which you have spent or wasted the last year, and then say candidly, whether you deserve to enjoy another, or are entitled to a continuance of that goodness with which this has been crowned? If you have been devout, thankful, resigned, contrite, diligent, and charitable, study to become more so; if not, repent betimes, and lay some foundation for good hopes in time to come. Let every day be considered as your last. And God will crown your years with his goodness; and when the revolution of years shall cease, will adorn and bless your existence with eternal glory.

If you have suffered the ordinary course of Providence to pass unnoticed, have you also been insensible to its more awful dispensations, and inattentive to the glorious display of divine grace in the Gospel of our Lord? Are you more stable in your faith, better grounded in your hopes, and more ardent in your charity? Or has your faith been shaken without being refuted, your hopes damped by *sceptical trifles*, and while iniquity has abounded has your charity waxed cold? If you have fallen into such snares, guard against them in future, *remembering that scepticism is an art*, by which the ignorant attempt to elevate themselves above the wise, or degrade them to their own level:—that it is natural for those to doubt of everything who *know nothing*; and that many a man can obscure every subject with doubt who is incapable of illuminating any with certainty and truth. Let us not rashly abandon that *Divine hope*, which is the second of the Christian graces, nor charity, which is the greatest of the three, the bond of perfectness, the tie which links together every social duty, the attribute which connects man with his Maker, sets him in the place of God to his brethren, and prepares him for being united with his Heavenly Father for ever.

NEMO.

REVIEW.

A Learned Indian in Search of a Religion. A Discourse occasioned by the Death of the Rajah Rammohun Roy; delivered in the Presbyterian Church of Strand-street, Dublin, on Sunday, October 27th, 1833. By William Hamilton Drummond, D. D. Shaw, Dublin; Archer, Belfast.

WE are always happy to hear of a new publication from the pen of Dr. Drummond. We are sure to find in its pages, solid learning adduced in support of enlightened and comprehensive principles; and never fail to rise from the perusal, refreshed and delighted by enlarged views of important truth, stated with admirable clearness and perspicuity; defended by sound and convincing argument; and enforced with all the charms of eloquence. We have frequently spoken in terms of high approval of the author's numerous productions, in defence of Unitarian principles. The public voice has ratified our humble judgment, and established him in the rank of the most popular writers of the day. The discourse now before us will sustain his reputation: this we know is saying a good deal; but we feel persuaded that we may go farther, and predict that in many quarters, it will even extend and increase his celebrity.

The melancholy event which occasioned this discourse, has occupied the thoughts and called forth the sympathies of many eminent preachers and writers. We observe that sermons upon this subject have been delivered in all the principal towns of England and Scotland; and that several of them have been published, or are in the course of publication. It well became Dr. Drummond,—who had already declared his admiration of the character and talents of Rammohun Roy, by dedicating to him, conjointly with Dr. Channing, his "*Essay on the Trinity*"—to step forth,—the first of the Irish Unitarians,—to do honour to his memory. Dr. Drummond is probably not aware that the late illustrious Brahmin, felt for his abilities and exertions, a reciprocal respect. Such, however, we believe to be the fact. One circumstance we know, which leads us to form this conclusion, and which we can state on the best authority. Soon after the Rajah's arrival in London, the publisher of the "*Essay on the Trinity*" waited upon him, with a handsome copy of the work, which he presented to him, at the same time calling his attention to the dedi-

cation. The Rajah, in reply, expressed himself as highly pleased and flattered by the honour conferred upon him by such an author; and assigned to the work a conspicuous place in his study—where, we believe, it did not lie unused.

Dr. Drummond has taken for the text of this discourse on Rammohun Roy, the beautiful apostrophe which occurs in Psalms lxxxvi. 8, 9, 10. *"Among the Gods there is none like unto thee, O Lord! neither are there any works like unto thy works. All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord: and shall glorify thy name; for thou art great and doest wondrous things: thou art God alone."* After a rapid glance as the testimony to the truth declared in the last of these verses,—namely, that "**JEHOVAH** is God *alone*," afforded by revelation and nature, he proceeds to consider the views and doctrines which would naturally suggest themselves, on an attentive perusal of scripture, to an idolator or polytheist, who had been led by the strength of his own mental powers, properly exercised, to embrace a belief in one God, the father of all. These he shews, by a most clear and satisfactory process, to be the same with those which are professed by Unitarian Christians, in all the most important articles of faith—those which relate to Almighty God, to his son, Jesus Christ, and to the nature of the Gospel, which the latter came into the world to preach. We are reluctant to make long extracts from a discourse which many of our subscribers have probably seen already; but the importance of the remarks in the following passage, will excuse us for wishing to put them into the hands of every reader of the Bible Christian.

Such is a rapid sketch, a hasty outline—easy however to be completed and filled up—of the doctrines which an honest inquirer would discover by his own perusal of the Scriptures; and if he believed all this, and endeavoured to form his life by the precepts and example of our Lord, ought we to deem his creed deficient, or should we deny to him the title of Christian, though he failed to discover the peculiar doctrines by which some Churches choose to be distinguished? Assuredly there are many tenets deemed of primary importance by some denominations of Christians, which by the utmost diligence of research, he could not find. All Protestants will agree that he would explore the Scriptures in vain for the charter conferring the infallibility, or the right of supremacy on the visible head of any particular Church. They would all concur in declaring that it is equally vain to seek in them for the doctrine of Transubstantiation—prayer to the Virgin Mary—Penance, Auri-

cular Confession, Extreme Unction, and masses for the souls of the departed. But what if he should be unable to discover some of their own favourite articles? What if not one of those Popish doctrines, appears to him a tittle more irrational and unscriptural than those of Original Sin, Infinite Satisfaction, Vicarious Punishment, Vicarious Righteousness, Election and Reprobation, and the Three in One? To many who are as sound believers in Christianity, and as much under its sacred influences, as the most orthodox man upon earth, none of those doctrines seems to have any legitimate claim to belief, resting as they do on tradition, or the flimsy authority of mystified and mystifying ecclesiastics, but destitute of any solid foundation in the records of evangelical truth.

The case, I well imagine, would be altogether different with a man who should come to the perusal of the sacred volume with a previously adopted creed, and with all the influence of first impressions continually interfering, and counteracting the plain and obvious meaning of Scripture. Such a man engages in the study not for information, but proof; not to discover what is actually taught, but what support he can find for his peculiar notions. He will mould the Scriptures to his creed, and not his creed to the Scriptures. Hence so many shocking perversions of their meaning, so much twisting and screwing to adjust them to particular formulas; their beauty marred, their wisdom turned to folly, their power over the heart and affections abused to serve the interests of a blind superstition.

Though he cannot readily find that which he seeks, yet giving implicit credence to the assertion, that such and such doctrines may be *collected* from holy writ, he becomes a *collector*; delights in that "index learning, which turns no student pale;" sweeps through the leaves of his Concordance; gathers texts upon texts from every book in the Bible, which have the least reference to the subject, and which, though they have no manner of connexion, nor even a similar sense, yet having a similar sound, answer his object equally well. In proportion to his imagined success in this task, or his real want of it, he will laud his skill, or tax his stupidity; the latter seldom happens, for nothing is more easy, if the mind be properly predisposed, than to find a whole system of divinity in half a dozen texts. He soon falls into the belief, that in certain expressions more is meant than meets the ear—that learned theologians understand and can explain them best—that there are mystical and cabalistic meanings, known only to adepts, and therefore he must become an adept. Shall he trust to his own judgment? Shall he dare to differ from great and learned authorities? To his plain sense the Scriptures may say one thing, but the adepts, who can extract the pure theological gold from baser matter, say another. They possess the infallible touchstone, by which they can distinguish the genuine ore from the counterfeit, and shall he question the rectitude of their decision?—What! oppose his modern home-spun sense, to their ancient and refined traditionary lore! Thus he reasons, and thus instead of exercising his own powers of thought, and following the Scripture precepts to "prove all things," and "in understanding to be a man," he proves nothing, but surrenders his free-born mind to be harnessed and yoked, to be whipped and spurred. If he has already been taught to believe in the "real presence," he will re-

main quite satisfied that this is the doctrine taught in the words "this is my body." And if he has already acquiesced in the assertion, that *three may be one, and one three*, what proof that the Son is the Father, should he demand beyond the declaration, "I and my Father are one?" In defiance of all reason and sense, and the demonstrative evidence of parallel texts, that unity of purpose, and not unity of essence, can be meant, he adheres, with desperate fidelity, to the orthodox interpretation, and yet if he had not before heard of that doctrine, most assuredly he could never have found it in the Bible.

We shall be told by some of the advocates of human formulas of faith, that the doctrines contained in them, though not directly taught in any chapter, or paragraph of the sacred text, may be inferred from a number of texts properly *strung together* ! Yes—this is exactly the mode in which so many foolish and extravagant notions have been deduced from holy writ. But *inferences* are not revelations—and it amazes me to think, how any man assuming to be an honest teacher of Christianity, and an expounder of the gospel, would so dishonour his own judgment, and tamper with his conscience, as to take *inferences* in place of positive announcements. Can any man be fully persuaded in his own mind, that he is justifiable in supposing that a question of such magnitude, as whether there be only one God, or three, is left to depend on an *inference* ? Were the Trinity a doctrine of revelation, revelation would teach it—yes, would teach it to the poor, to children, to babes—and not leave it to be discovered by an intricate process of investigation, which, after all, could never lead to conviction, many of the best reasoners who ever formed a syllogism.

On the other hand, there are numerous instances of persons coming to the study of the Bible with all their early prepossessions matured in favour of a creed called orthodox, who, notwithstanding, have been obliged to abandon it, as not only untenable by the Scriptures, but in direct contradiction to their plainest statements. They have been forced, by the irresistible power of truth, to give up, one after another, every text which they thought favourable to their cause, till not an iota was left for its support, and the whole system has crumbled into fragments, like the enchanted castle of some wicked wizard of romance, at the sound of a true knight's horn, and vanished away, leaving "not a wreck behind."

The simple and sublime doctrine of the Unitarian Christian, "To us there is one God, the Father," is not an inference, but a positive declaration of Holy writ. The passages by which it is corroborated are so numerous, so explicit, and so strong, that it is impossible to controvert or explain them away, by all the sophistry and chicanery of theological schools ; though it must be admitted that many churches by maintaining what they term a *Trinity in Unity* and *Unity in Trinity*, destroy the beauty, the simplicity, and the power of the Christian doctrine, contradict the Scriptures in which they find no similar expressions, nor similar ideas—raise fatal obstacles to the progress of Christianity, and in the opinion of the most intelligent Heathens, Jews and Christians, bring on themselves the imputation of polytheism and idolatry.

These observations Dr. Drummond amply justifies by reference to the history and works of the extraordinary man whose death had occasioned the sermon. It would give us great pleasure to adorn our pages with farther extracts from this part of the discourse; but we must forbear. We have already laid before our readers in the last number of the *Bible Christian* a tolerably full account of the life and labours of Rammohun Roy. We have quoted as much as we think fair, in justice to the author and publisher, from the admirable sermon of Dr. Drummond: and we hope that those who approve of the extracts already given, and those with whom our opinion will have any influence, will have recourse to the sermon and peruse it for themselves. T.

TO THE REV. S. DILL.

Rev. and dear Sir,—I now proceed to consider the evidence, which the account of the miraculous conception, affords to the doctrine of the trinity; and how far your attempt to free that doctrine from the absurdities and contradictions hitherto inseparable from it, is in accordance with the Word of God. I commence with the latter of these, because, if I can shew that your theory of the “origin of the Divine Sonship” is utterly subversive of the New Testament, I shall then to my own mind, and indeed to that of every sincere believer in revelation, have fully disproved it. As you have very clearly and satisfactorily shown how unscriptural and absurd is the doctrine of eternal generation, and assailed with very considerable success the doctrines of Dr. Adam Clarke, and other modern divines, who in endeavouring to free themselves from the absurdities of former systems, have fallen into others equally glaring,—should I be able to overturn yours, between us we shall have established one most important point, that no explanation which has ever yet been given to the world, of the Sonship of Christ Jesus, will permit us to retain the doctrine of the trinity, and keep our Bibles. I have long thought it must come to this at last; and with me it will not require long deliberation which I shall renounce. I cannot afford to part with my Bible.

Now, so far as I am able to understand you, the following is a statement of your views on the subject

of the miraculous conception. Rejecting the doctrine of eternal generation, which would give to Christ only a derived existence, and would deny him that incommunicable attribute of the Deity, self-existence, you maintain that in his divine nature he is *unbegotten* and self-existent. (See page 12 and various other parts of your pamphlet.) Secondly, the following are your views, so far as I can understand you, respecting his human nature. That this was produced by the "presiding energies of the Holy Ghost." At p. 59, where you enter most distinctly into the statement of your theory of "the Sonship of Jesus Christ," you say, "a controversialist, of physiological acumen and Christian candour, would not for a moment suppose, that the miraculous conception was the ground of the divine Sonship, in any sense, unless in reference to the Virgin mother, or other human progenitors. The *incarnation*, not the *conception*, is put forth in this passage (Luke i. 35,) as the origin and constituting cause of this Sonship. The *conception* was effected by the presiding energies of the Holy Ghost, &c. Again, p. 90, "The *conception* was the *production* of the human nature of Christ, of the substance of the Virgin, by the energies of the Holy Ghost, &c. Again, at page 56, The incarnation is, therefore, not a *reason*, but the *reason*, the *only ground* on which the Holy Scriptures establish the divine relations of paternity and filiation between the first and second persons of the Godhead.

First, Now I think it is plain, if words have any meaning, that *incarnation* is not *begetting*.

Secondly, It is equally plain, from the view of your theory, that Christ Jesus our Saviour is not the Son of God by being begotten of the Father; nay, that in point of fact he was never begotten of the father. Not eternally begotten, (see pages 10 and 15) for this would be the monstrous pagan absurdity of a begotten God. Not begotten "before all worlds," for this would be the heretical doctrine held by Dr. S. Clarke and his followers. (see pages 10 and 15.) Not begotten in his divine nature, for that is essentially underived, and is equally self-existent with the father. Not in his human nature, for this is the heresy of Dr. Adam Clarke, to which you strongly object, (see p. 90) and as we have already seen, that was "produced by the presiding energies of the Holy Ghost, from the substance of the virgin mo-

ther." And it must plainly follow, that if he is not begotten by the father, either in his human or divine nature, that he cannot be begotten by him conjointly in both, for this would be again not only to have a *begotten God*, but as you reject the doctrine of eternal generation, a God, who is not yet two thousand years old. When then, I ask, was Christ Jesus our Lord, according to you, begotten of the Father? Never, either in his divine or human nature; never, either in time or eternity!!

Now, if there be a doctrine of the New Testament which is plainer than another, it is, that Christ Jesus our Lord is not only begotten, but is begotten of the Father. If this be not the fact, then the history of the miraculous conception is an impious and blasphemous fable; and some hundred passages of the New Testament, which either directly or by implication assert the same doctrine, must proclaim a direct falsehood. How came you then, sir, to overlook this plain and undeniable fact, and to attempt to establish in its place, the monstrously unscriptural position, that Christ the Son of God is not begotten of the Father, and that his Sonship rests *ONLY* upon his incarnation? What a miserable and pitiful subterfuge is your reply to the unanswerable objection of Dr. Millar, that if the doctrine of eternal generation, with *all its absurdities*, be not true, then, in direct contradiction to the uniform tenor of the Holy Scriptures, not the Father, but the Holy Ghost, must be the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In reply to this you tell us, that "conception can only have a reference to the virgin mother, or other human progenitors." Now, for my life, I cannot see what "other human progenitors" could possibly have to do with the conception. But waving this, suppose conception to have only a reference to the mother, what will you say of him who is the cause of that conception? Is not he who produces conception the father of that which is conceived, as certainly as the female who conceives is the mother, and is there to this a single exception in all the varied languages of the earth? And when you, overlooking the universally admitted use of the terms, found the relation of father and son, not upon begetting but incarnation, do you not introduce a new and hitherto unheard of use of the terms? Now we have the authority of an angel for asserting, that there was a being

who produced conception, that is, who begat ; and who that being was we shall soon inquire, but whoever he was, he must have been the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But the difference between us here lies within the narrowest possible compass. It is either a fact that Jesus Christ the Son of God is *begotten* of the Father, or it is a falsehood. Now remember, that to beget is to produce conception, and whoever produced conception in the womb of the virgin, and he only has begotten our Lord Jesus Christ. I shall content myself at present with the testimony of three respectable witnesses to prove who that was. The first witness is God Almighty himself, Psalms II, 7. "The Lord hath said to me, thou art my *Son*, to day I have begotten thee." Jehovah here declares the Messiah to be his Son, because he had begotten him. Now we have your authority for saying, that the title "Son of God is personal, and in all its various and manifold applications designates a true and proper person ; but that the human nature of Christ is *not a person* ; it is only one, and infinitely the inferior of the two natures that constitute the person born of the virgin, and called the Son of God," (see p. 90.) We have also your authority for saying, that "to day," in scripture, uniformly signifies that which is done in time. Here then is God himself declaring, upon your own showing, that he has, in the fulness of the time, begotten not the manhood, but his son, that is, "the divine and human nature in personal union," (see p. 91.) This is the testimony of God ; to this is offered the evidence of the Rev. S. Dill, that God never begat the Divine nature of our Lord, for it was as self-existent as his own, and that he did not beget, produced the conception of his human nature, for that was done "by the presiding energies of the Holy Ghost."

Again, I produce the testimony of John, who asserts, (John I, 14) "And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the *only begotten* of the Father." Here it is asserted, not only that he is begotten, but that he is the only begotten of the father, because the father neither in time or eternity begat any other. To this is opposed the testimony of the Rev. S. Dill, who tells us, that it was the incarnation only that was effected by the power of the Highest, but that he did not beget. (see p. 59.)

The last witness with whom I shall confront you is the Apostle Peter, (I Peter, I, 3.) "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy," &c. This Apostle proclaims the Almighty to be both the God and the Father of Christ, according to you he is neither; or if the father, it is a new and hitherto unheard of ground; but most certainly not the God of Jesus Christ. Not the God of his divine nature, for that would be to proclaim the superiority of the Father over the Deity of the Son, which you will not admit. Not the God of his human nature, for that is not what is intended here. The terms Lord Jesus Christ, are personal titles applied only to "a true and proper person; but the manhood of Christ is not a person," and Peter could not be guilty of the gross mistake which you very properly reprehend of ascribing personal titles to that which is not a person. It is evident that Peter meant the personal union of both the divine, and human natures in the being to whom he gave these titles, and that he believed Jehovah was the God and father of both; but according to you this is rank heresy, and Peter is a heretic.

The truth is, yours is only one, added to the many abortive attempts so frequently made, to support the unscriptural and self-contradictory dogma of a trinity. I am willing to admit the talent, and ingenuity you have displayed, and still more admire the acuteness and ability with which you have exposed the self-styled orthodox doctrine of eternal generation; but I cannot shut my eyes to the new and unscriptural ground on which you establish the sonship of Christ, founding it upon the incarnation, and not upon the universally recognised principle of the word of God, that he is the begotten of the Father. I cannot approve of an attempt, which, if successful, would not only prove the miraculous conception, but the whole of the New Testament to be a fable, by making one part palpably and directly contradict another; for if there be one principle more plainly and distinctly laid down in Scripture than another, it is that Jesus Christ the Saviour of mankind and the whole Saviour, is the begotten of the Father. Now with your opinions, this is utterly irreconcilable. According to you, "it is only in one, and that infinitely the inferior of the two natures, that he could be begotten:" and even in that, he is begotten, not by

the person who is in Scripture stiled his father, but by one who is never either called, or acknowledged by him as such. But in the nature in which as a Saviour he could be confided in, and is entitled to our love and homage, he neither is nor could be begotten; and therefore in direct opposition to the Scriptures, which represent the Saviour as the only begotten of the Father, you declare in all that is valuable and to be trusted, he was never begotten.

But let us now turn from the unscriptural and unsatisfactory theories of men, to the simple narrative given by the Evangelists, of the conception and birth of our Blessed Lord. Two of these, Mathew and Luke, in the first chapters of their Gospels, profess to give an account of this event, and if they are honest and well informed historians, they will state clearly and distinctly, what is most material for us to know, and as the whole event is extraordinary, they will detail, in language not calculated to mislead, or deceive, the most remarkable part, of this miraculous occurrence. I am the more induced to enter into an examination of this part of the sacred history, because you state, and with the statement I most sincerely agree, "that there is not in the Bible a more distinct, or satisfactory recognition of the all-important doctrine of the trinity than is there furnished." How satisfactory we shall now see. Mathew relates that Mary had been espoused to Joseph, but "before they came together," she was found to be with child. Joseph resolves to put her away privately, but whilst resolving on these things, an angel appears unto him, saying, "Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is *of the Holy Ghost*. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins." Now the things that deserve our attention here are, 1st, that what was conceived of Mary was *of the Holy Ghost*, that is, the Holy Ghost caused or produced conception, and we have seen already that to cause or produce conception is to beget. 2dly, That which she conceived, and brought forth, is the only revealed Saviour, saving his people from their sins. The narrative of Luke is, that the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary espoused to Joseph, saluting her: "Hail, highly favoured, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women." She is

troubled at the salutation, and to comfort her the angel adds, "Fear not Mary, thou hast found favour with God. And behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great and shall be called the son of the Highest. Then said Mary, how shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." The narrative here is substantially the same as that given by Mathew, and much of the difference of detail will be accounted for on the ground of their being narratives of two different appearances, the one to Joseph, the other to Mary. They differ in this, that whereas Mathew states, that the conception is of the Holy Ghost, Luke connects with the Holy Ghost the power of the highest in producing conception. Now this difference of expression will be easily reconcilable, if we understand by the terms, "Holy Ghost and power of the Highest," the power and agency of the God and Father of our Saviour, exerted by his spirit, so as to produce conception. This makes him the agent, through whatever means that agency was exercised, and as the agent, makes him the begetter, the producer of the conception; and this explanation will reconcile the narrative here, with the other passages of Scripture which declare Christ to be the begotten, and the only begotten of the Father. But this is to abandon the doctrine of the trinity; for if that doctrine be true, I confess I do not see how this part of the New Testament history can be reconciled with other parts of the sacred volume, and we must come to this conclusion at the last, either that the history of the miraculous conception is a fable, or the doctrine of the trinity the idle invention of a Pagan philosophy, and I confess I would rather incline to the latter than charge the Evangelists, Mathew and Luke, with the fabrication of an infamous falsehood.

But I shall examine this narrative more minutely, proceeding upon the supposition, that the doctrine of a Trinity is true, and then it will be necessary to bear in mind what a trinity is. It supposes three persons, each God blessed for ever, possessed of all possible perfections, and perfectly equal in power and glory. It is not

easy indeed to know what is meant by an addition sometimes made to this ; “ that each of them is distinguished by his personal properties.” It is true, if they are not thus distinguished, they are not three distinct persons ; but only three different names for the same person. But it is equally true, if they are thus distinguished they are then as distinct beings as Peter, James, and John, and thus you have three Gods. Besides, to *car-nal reason* there is some little difficulty in understanding what these personal properties are, whether perfections or imperfections. If perfections, and each has his own personal property, then each has a perfection which the others want, and then they are not equal ; if they are imperfections, then there are imperfections in your God, and each of the persons has an imperfection of his own which neither of the others feel, and they are not equal. For instance, the Westminster Confession of Faith, from which I take the account, tells us, “ that it is the personal property of the Father to beget, of the Son to be begotten, and of the Holy Ghost to proceed from both.” I want then to know, is it a perfection to beget ; if it is, the Father has a perfection not shared by the Son or the Holy Spirit, and therefore they cannot be equal with him. Is it a perfection or an imperfection to be begotten ? You consider it an imperfection, and will not allow it to the supreme Deity of Christ. Yet it is an imperfection, since you will have it one, which according to Scripture belongs to your Saviour, for he is not only the Son of God, but the only begotten of the Father. Thus you prove an imperfection against your saviour, and one which the Father has not, for he was never begotten, therefore your Saviour is not equal with the Father. But I had forgotten, these are only mysteries to the uninitiated in the cabalistic mysteries of a creed : then how unkind and unchristian, not to admit more into the secrets of your craft ! You can easily convince their understandings with the very plain and intelligible declaration of an old divine. “ The Father is God, and something more ; the Son is God, and something more ; the Holy Ghost is God, and something more ; yet all three are only God, and nothing more.” Now this is a pretty little puzzle for a winter’s evening.

W. GLENDY. :

(To be concluded in our next.)

Intelligence.

SCOTTISH UNITARIAN CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION.

ON Sunday and Monday, September 29 and 30, the Third Anniversary of this Institution since its re-establishment, was held at Glasgow. In the morning of Sunday, Rev. J. Scott Porter, of Belfast, conducted the worship, and Rev. Dr. Drummond, of Dublin, preached a most interesting and beautiful discourse on the Scriptural representations of the character of God, from Mat. vii. 9—11.

The whole service in the afternoon was taken by Mr. Porter, who preached on the argument, of numbers being a test of truth, from Acts v. 38, 39. In the evening Mr. Harris prayed, and Dr. Drummond preached from John viii. 31, 32, powerfully urging the importance and the duty of earnestly inquiring after and manfully professing Christian truth. The Chapel throughout the day was crowded by a respectable and attentive audience : friends being present from Dundee, Dunfermline, Tillicoultry, Old Lanark, New Lanark, Kirkfield Bank, Carluke, Davies Dykes, Bellshill, Dalry, Crutherland, Paisley, Renfrew, Saltcoats, Largs, Innerkip, Greenock, Port-Glasgow, Dumbarton, Old Kilpatrick, Old Cumnock, Peebles, &c. The collection was £14 : 8 : 5.

At the conclusion of the morning worship, the Report of the Committee of the Association was read by the Secretary, Mr. Harris. Limited as is our space, we are anxious to lay the *entire* of this most interesting document before our readers. It is as follows:—

“The Committee of the Scottish Unitarian Christian Association, in presenting their *Third* Report to its members and friends, congratulate them on the altered and improving circumstances in which they assemble at this Anniversary. In giving an account of their stewardship, it will be seen, they hope, that every effort has been made which the means at their disposal enable them to employ, for the promotion of the great and important objects of the Institution committed to their charge.

I. Correspondence for mutual encouragement and aid in the promotion of the sacred and benevolent principles of their common faith, has been continued with Aberdeen, Auchterarder, Tillicoultry, Edinburgh, Greenock, Paisley, Dundee, Blackford, Falkirk, Carluke, Kilmarnock, Port-Glasgow, Saltcoats, Dumbarton, Dumblane, Gra-

hamstown, Lanark, Old Cumnock, Monkland, Dalry, Beith, and Irvine, and has been commenced with the following additional places to those enumerated in former Reports,—Hamilton, Bannockburn, Dreghorn, Innerleithen, Alloa, Catrine, and Dunfermline. Letters have been received from several individuals and congregations to which your attention will be directed in the course of this Report.

II. The Committee have to notice with unfeigned satisfaction, the indefatigable labours of their respected Missionary, Rev. Henry Clarke. His zeal and energy have been unabated. Even during a period in the past year, which must to him have been truly afflictive, and in the circumstances of which they sincerely sympathised—his devotedness to the great work in which he is engaged, was unwearied. Having heard from the various stations at which he had laboured during the first year of his engagement with the Association, urging the renewal of it (with exception of one Society, Paisley, which from peculiar circumstances was obliged to discontinue its subscription, being called on to make pecuniary efforts for the liquidation of the burden on its place of worship,) the Committee unanimously re-invited the Missionary.

They were happy in Mr. Clarke's acceptance of the invitation; and the account of his labours during the past year, which will now be submitted to you, shows the importance of the office he sustains, and its great utility in spreading abroad the knowledge and practice of enlightened and Scriptural worship.

To the Committee of the Scottish Unitarian Association.

GENTLEMEN,—The report of my missionary labours since the last Anniversary Meeting, I present to you with the mingled feelings of pleasure, regret, and hope. I derive pleasure from a review of what has been accomplished; I feel regret that more has not been effected; and I entertain hope in the onward progress and final triumph of the holy cause—the cause of Christian truth and heavenly love which we espouse. Long experience had taught me, not to be too sanguine in my expectations. From my own theological thralldom and subsequent emancipation, and my intimate acquaintance with numerous cases similar to my own, I had too well learned how inveterate are early religious impressions—how gigantic are long-settled habits of thinking—and how potent are the influences of worldly fashion, to permit myself to calculate very largely upon the early visible effects which my humble exertions would produce. I was fully aware that the aspect of the land in which bigotry is piled on bigotry, lofty as its mountains, and prejudice and superstition are poured forth plenteous as its floods, is not

to be changed in a day or a year. But the Divine Teacher who was sent from God, has declared, that "If we have faith as a grain of mustard-seed, the mountains shall be removed;" and then, too, the floods shall be restrained, and the land made to smile under the influences of our Heavenly Father's love, and yield abundantly the fruits of fraternal affection. Aided by the power, and comforted by the spirit, and animated by the utility of this faith from above, I have been enabled to hold on my way, trusting in God, and endeavouring to spread what we believe to be "the truth as it is in Jesus;" and I now place before you a general view of my labours.

During the period which has elapsed since my last report, I have continued to visit all the places excepting one at the same intervals, and upon the same plan as during the preceding year. But it will be seen that my attention has also been directed towards several new places.

Carlisle has been visited as heretofore twice a-month. I have accordingly officiated at this place twenty-four Sabbaths, and delivered fifty-four discourses. In the course of the year I have administered the Lord's Supper twice, and had on the first occasion forty communicants, and on the last forty-seven. The attendance on public worship has been uniformly good. In the neighbourhood of Carlisle, I have delivered the following number of occasional lectures:—at Davies Dykes one; at Wishawtown one; at New Lanark two; and at old Lanark six. Some of them were delivered to large audiences, although others were but thinly attended. The obstacles to the extension of religious sentiments differing materially from those which are commonly promulgated, are here, as elsewhere, both numerous and formidable; but it is encouraging to observe, that an evident advance has been made in this district, of the great principles of Gospel truth and Christian charity. Such principles must continue to acquire strength, and more and more extend.

Paisley was at the time of my last report visited once a-month. These monthly visits I continued to the end of February, when the Paisley friends found it necessary to make such alterations in their plans, as rendered their connection with the Missionary department of the Association no longer practicable. Up to the period when this connection ceased, I visited Paisley six times, and delivered seventeen discourses, and one in the adjoining village of Johnstone. Since February our friends in this district have proceeded without the assistance of missionary preaching, and no doubt they will furnish a statement of their present condition and prospects.

Kilmarnock has been visited by me nine times since my last report. In the course of these visits, I have preached in this town twenty-five times, and held three public discussions. For a period the attendance on public religious services was, in consequence of some local circumstances, and the death of a zealous, active individual, but thin; yet the discussions on the Trinity seem to have excited considerable attention and inquiry, and the number of persons who attended the services of the last Sabbath, exceeded most of the preceding days. The discussions have been very much crowded, especially the last, which was an examination of the Scrip-

ture doctrine respecting the person and powers of our Saviour. Opposition of the most violent kind has been offered to the spread of our views, and methods the most disgraceful have been resorted to, and means the most unfair employed to destroy our cause in its infancy; but Scriptural truth, Christian philanthropy, and Evangelical simplicity, have evinced themselves too potent for misrepresentation and bigotry.

In the neighbourhood of Kilmarnock I have visited and preached at Dreghorn once, and Irvine twice, and held several religious conversations with Unitarians and inquirers after truth in some other places. Books and tracts explanatory of our religious sentiments have been pretty extensively circulated in this district, and they continue to be in request. When it is considered that not many more than twenty months have elapsed since the first professedly Unitarian sermon was preached in Kilmarnock—that the total number of visits amounts to but fifteen—that we were so soon deprived by death of the friend on whom we mainly relied—and that the utmost exertions have been made to deter persons from attending our meetings—it is far from being matter of surprise that those who openly avow Unitarian Christianity are not numerous. But these remain unscathed, and invite their townsmen to fair examination, and look confidently forward to the increase of their numbers.

Tillicoultry has received ten visits from me, and I have by these been enabled to deliver twenty-nine discourses, and administer the Lord's Supper twice. On the first of these occasions there were fourteen communicants, and on the last twenty-one. The friends here were for a time without a suitable place in which to hold their meetings, but through the kindness of one of the members, a space in a newly erected mill has been appropriated to that purpose, and there they now comfortably assemble. In the neighbourhood of Tillicoultry, I have lectured twice at Alva, once at Alloa, and once at Sauchey; besides this, on my return from these places, I have lectured three times at Bannockburn. At all these places there are a few Unitarians, and there is good reason to anticipate that ere long there will be more.

On the 30th of December I went for the first time to the town of Dunfermline, to which I had been invited by a few persons who had recently discarded Trinitarianism, for the very serious reason that they could not find it in the Bible. Large audiences attended on the services of the day. Three weeks subsequently, Mr. Harris followed up my efforts, by proceeding to Dunfermline, and preaching to the people, and forming a Society. Since that period, this new church has been visited by myself four times, by Mr. Stannus once, Mr. Harris once, and Mr. Macdonald once. I have delivered sixteen discourses in this town, and one in the neighbouring village of Brucefield. On the 12th of August I held a public discussion on the doctrine of the Trinity, and on the 6th of September, Mr. Macdonald held another, on the Deity of Christ, and on both occasions the place of meeting was crowded to excess. The members of the Society have gone on gradually increasing, and there is now every rational ground to consider the cause of Christian Unitarianism as established in Dunfermline on a permanent basis, and to believe, that notwithstanding the violent resistance which

has been, and probably will repeatedly be offered, to that sacred cause, it will yet maintain the advantages which it has acquired, and ultimately prevail.

Besides the beforenamed places, I have also paid one visit to Hamilton, and preached twice to large congregations. If to these labours be added my exchanges with Messrs. Stannus, Harris, and Macdonald, the sum total of my Missionary operations may be thus stated:—84 visits made to 22 places, at which 181 discourses have been delivered, and 4 public discussions conducted; and to accomplish which I have travelled 2,500 miles, mostly on foot.

On several occasions I have lectured in the open air, on the subject of Church Establishments; and I have also delivered the same, and similar lectures, within doors. To this course I have been urged by the solemn conviction, that our views of God's dealings, Christ's doctrines, and men's duties and destinies, require us not only to advocate Voluntary Church principles, but to carry on those views to their only legitimate consequence, that of rejecting all human authority in matters of religion, and acting as the freemen of Christ, and the worshippers of the One God and Father of all. To impress my fellow-men with the truths, that Jesus alone is our spiritual Master—that his Father and our Father is the only true God,—that all men are brethren—that Christianity is a system of liberty, light, and love—and that those who are labouring to attain and diffuse virtue, spiritual-mindedness, and true self-respect, are labouring most efficiently to secure present and eternal happiness—has been the paramount aim, and the soul's desire of, Gentlemen,

Your devoted Missionary,

HENRY CLARKE.

The Committee are persuaded they only speak a language which will be responded to by every individual present, when they lament the inadequate support they can give to so unwearied a labourer. Happy will they be should increased aid from the subscribers and friends to the Institution put it in the power of the future officers of the Association to accomplish what all must desire, the more suitable remuneration of their Missionary. That happiness will be still more increased, should they be enabled to avail themselves of the aid of another labourer, Mr. M'Kean, from the effect of whose pleadings in behalf of Christian truth and righteousness in Paisley, they augur much good, could they be more extensively diffused.

IV. The Committee have been particularly interested in the circumstances which led to the open profession of Christian Unitarianism at Dunfermline, by some individuals, the history of whose change from Calvinism to Scriptural light, affords another instance that knowledge is of power to break the strongest fetters of prejudice—that pure philosophy is the handmaid to undefiled Chris-

tianity—and that there is a harmony in nature, Providence, and the Gospel, which must eventually strike the most benighted devotee of the common theology, that conviction itself becoming the means of ushering its recipient into the glorious liberty of a child of God. In the report of the Missionary, it has been stated, that a congregation has been formed at Dunfermline. The difficulties with which this infant Church has had to combat, have been great and trying; every species of misrepresentation has been employed to prevent its establishment, but that misrepresentation has only excited further inquiry; several persons have joined the congregation who were previously unknown to the individuals who originated it, and the result from the judgment and integrity of its members cannot but be good.

At the earnest solicitation of the friends at Aberdeen, the Committee intend to avail themselves of the visit of Mr. M'Donald to his native city, and have requested him to preach on the Sundays during his stay; earnestly hoping with their respected correspondent in that place, that his labours may "ultimately end in a respectable Unitarian Congregation being formed in this, the northern metropolis of Scotland." They are happy to announce that Mr. M'Donald has promptly acceded to their wishes.

V. The Committee of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, in testimony of the interest they take in the proceedings of this Association, and as an expression of their sympathy and good wishes for the accomplishment of its objects, have transmitted twenty pounds in aid of its efforts. From the Fellowship fund of the Gravel-Pit Meeting, Hackney, five pounds have been received, and the Liverpool Joint Fellowship Fund has, without any renewed application from your Committee, repeated its former grant of five pounds. The cordial and heartfelt thanks of the Unitarians of Scotland are tendered for these generous donations.

The Committee now request your attention to the Reports from the following places and Congregations.

[In IRVINE, KILWINNING, DALRY, SALTCOATS, DREGHORN, CATRINE, OLD CUMNOCK, there are individual believers in Christian Unitarianism—inquiry is made for Unitarian books—and less bigotry is manifested towards these principles.—At DUMBARTON and its neighbourhood, in consequence of the circulation of the Christian Pioneer and other works, the number of believers in God's Unity and benevolence is increasing. This district presents a good field for the exertions of a missionary.—In FALKIRK the established clergy-

man is putting forth his utmost power to undo all that his predecessor, Rev. Dr. Wilson, did for christian charity ; but the very excess of his bigotry and Calvinism is inducing inquiry.—KILMARNOCK friends express an earnest desire for the continuance of Missionary visits, a desire in which they are joined by correspondents in several surrounding villages. An impression has been made, inquiry has been called forth, a member of the Baptist congregation has lately been excommunicated for the denial of Christ's deity, and much eagerness is shown to read Unitarian publications.

“ PAISLEY has lately received some new ministers of her Established Churches. They are young fiery zealots—and have marshalled all their forces: funds have been raised—town missionaries have been employed—numerous places for their worship have been opened—permanent Sunday evening sermons have been established—and little publications have been thrust gratuitously into every house. In these publications, they have modestly assumed to be the stated ‘ambassadors of Christ,’ and with Evangelical humility have affirmed their ability to preach a ‘fuller and clearer revelation,’ than did the Saviour to the Jews. After thus seating themselves in the Cardinal Chair, and laying claim to superior inspiration, they indiscriminately classed Unitarianism, infidelity, and reckless profanity together, and charged them as the causes of the distress, ignorance, demoralization, and irreligion of the inhabitants of Paisley! The Unitarian congregation, in self-defence, published an address to their townsmen ; and, under the superintendence of the Rev. G. Harris, of Glasgow, a course of Sabbath evening lectures was arranged and conducted with great ability ; and they were attended by a considerable number of strangers from both town and country. Tracts on Christian Unitarianism were lent out at the close of each lecture, and although they were not eagerly sought after, yet a considerable number were circulated, so that a more correct knowledge of our sentiments was spread amongst the community, and some persons were convinced of the truth of our views. The lectures gave great satisfaction to those who heard them ; and at the close of the course, the Unitarian congregation unanimously passed a vote of thanks to the Rev. G. Harris, for the friendly zeal with which he undertook the management of the lectures, and respectfully tender him their warmest wishes for his prosperity, both as a pastor and as a private individual. At the same time, they voted thanks to the Rev. H. Clarke and A. Macdonald, Messrs. Wells, Lloyd, Cooper, and M’Kean, regretting their inability to remunerate them for their disinterested and valuable services—congratulating them on the eminent talent and ability displayed, which they take as an earnest of yet increasing labours and success in the cause of truth and the advancement of man. They affectionately assure them, that their gratitude will follow them to every scene of their usefulness, and that their success will ever inspire them with joy.

“ Since the course of lectures closed, Mr. M’Kean has continued his interesting, instructive, energetic, eloquent services on the first Sabbath of every month ; and that they are appreciated, abundantly appears by the increased and increasing audiences that he attracts. Our highest praise falls short of his merit, and our warmest thanks are but poor returns for his splendid exertions.

"We have also been favoured with the opening services of Mr. Maccall, and while we lament Mr. Macdonald's departure to the South, we congratulate our Greenock brethren on the intelligence and talent of his successor, by whom we were highly gratified, and the excellence of whose first ministrations assure us that he will be an able champion to maintain and forward the glorious cause. We wish him God speed."

At GREENOCK, "although the congregation may not have increased much in numbers during the past year, it has acquired a more steady and respectable form; in particular, many *families* now attend regularly. There are a few persons *not* connected with our Society, disposed to free inquiry on religious subjects; but the majority of the population, impelled, no doubt, by the overwhelming influence of the late changes in the Government, devote most of their spare moments to inquiry and discussions on politics. The spirit of bigotry is declining, particularly amongst the working classes. We have heard, however, of one or two instances of master tradesmen turning away their servants, principally if not solely, for having dared to attend the Unitarian Chapel. Other small tradesmen, on their own account, have urged intimidation from employers and customers as a reason for withdrawing from our worship. In the former part of the year, the Orthodox pulpits, established and dissenting, were incessant in their fulminations against Unitarianism; but latterly they have *simultaneously* *hung fire*, whether owing to the masterly castigation inflicted on one or two of their orators by Mr. Macdonald, through the medium of the press, or the manifest disgust of their own hearers, we have not the means of ascertaining.

"Yesterday (Sept. 22) closed the labours of our talented and bold young pastor, Mr. Macdonald, to whose zeal for truth, and manly candour in avowing it, amidst much clamour, obloquy, and opposition, we are indebted for the formation of the first Unitarian Society in Greenock. Many amongst us were most enthusiastically attached to him, and the parting on both sides was not without tears. But, thank God, as there was 'a Paul to plant so there was an Apollos to water,' and we can assure the young gentleman now coming amongst us from the folds of Orthodoxy, that he will be received with all affection and kindness."

The EDINBURGH Congregation has increased very considerably during the last two years. Notwithstanding an unprecedented number of deaths and removals which have occurred during that time, all the gaps have been supplied; and in addition to this, the ordinary attendance at public worship has been doubled. In the six months which have elapsed since the termination of the Sunday evening lectures given by Mr. Stannus last winter, there has been a larger accession of new members than in any similar period in the history of the Congregation.

"These favourable circumstances are chiefly to be imputed to the zeal, talent, and popularity of the Minister of the congregation, whose unremitting exertions have not only earned for him the merited approbation of his own regular hearers, but have attracted the attention of many inquiring persons of other religious persuasions, and of some to whom Christianity itself had previously appeared repulsive, in consequence of its being confounded with those formularies of faith of human invention, by which the religious education of the inhabitants of this country are so generally regulated.

" From the above facts, as well as from the frequent demands for the perusal of Unitarian books and tracts, and from the uniformly respectful manner in which Unitarian arguments and expositions are listened to, the Committee hope they may be permitted to infer that the spirit of bigotry, though still unhappily too prevalent, is yielding to the influence of education, of free inquiry, and of Scriptural truth; and that they may also be justified in indulging very sanguine hopes of the future prosperity and firm establishment of their own religious society. Till this object is thoroughly accomplished, the Committee think that the Edinburgh congregation will most effectually serve the cause of truth, by concentrating all their efforts for its attainment, under the conviction that by the establishment of a flourishing Unitarian Society in this great emporium of education, they will contribute more powerfully than they could in any other manner to the general diffusion of enlightened views of the religion of Jesus Christ."

" The Committee of the GLASGOW Unitarian Congregation have great pleasure in the return of an Anniversary on which they again assemble with their friends and brethren from various parts of their common country, to bear their testimony to Christian liberty and God's benevolence, and to unite with them in pouring forth their thanksgivings in the name of Jesus, to the one Jehovah, the Father of mercies, the Source of every blessing. They are happy in being able to state, that the affairs of their particular congregation are going on with undiminished improvement. The institutions connected with it continue to be supported with zeal, and to extend in usefulness. The Congregational Library contains upwards of five hundred volumes on the most important topics connected with theology and general literature; the average number of readers and subscribers being about seventy, by whom eight hundred and seventeen volumes have been taken out during the course of the past year.—The means adopted to increase the interest and usefulness of the Benevolent Society for the relief of the sick and poor of the congregation have been successful, and its funds were never in a more satisfactory condition.

" The congregation, anxious to liquidate the debt, £1180, which rests on their place of worship, have set on foot a Fellowship Fund, for the purpose of its gradual payment, the subscribers to which; at a halfpenny and upwards a week, amount to nearly two hundred. Their contributions, with the aid they hope to receive from all interested in the firm and prosperous establishment of their Society, will, they trust, in the course of a few years enable them to remove a burden which at present clogs their efforts, and thus place at their disposal the means of more widely disseminating the holy and benevolent views in which they have peace and joy in believing.

" Death, in the course of the past year, has called away some of their warmest friends; but upwards of fifty new subscribers have during the same period joined the congregation, several of whom have families. A spirit of rational and Scriptural inquiry is spreading—bigotry is declining—and many circumstances are at present occurring in this city highly favourable to the advancement of the doctrines and worship of the Gospel of Christ, of which they are confident their Pastor will avail himself in the course of Sunday evening

lectures he is about to commence ; and which they are persuaded will issue in the diffusion of knowledge and charity, and in many others joining themselves in the offering of that pure and sole adoration to the Great Father of all, of which the Saviour gave both the solemn precept and the hallowed example, and which, in obedience to both, they feel it their duty and their happiness cheerfully and gratefully to offer in his name and as his disciples.”]

The Committee cannot close their report without advertg to the loss which their common cause in Scotland is about to sustain in the removal of the Rev. Archibald Macdonald. His open and manly profession of despised and unpopular truth, united with his zealous and unwearied efforts, have added another congregation to those which previously existed in this country, in which worship is paid in the name of Jesus to the One God and Father of all. His readiness at all times to aid in the diffusion of principles on which are based the improvement and happiness of man—his advocacy of human rights—and his efforts to place knowledge within the reach of every individual, have won for him unfeigned esteem and attachment. Their best wishes are for his future usefulness and happiness.

Grateful would the Committee be to that benignant Providence which governs everything wisely and well, that the church at Greenock will not be left destitute by the removal of their former minister to England. He will be succeeded by an individual who has given a pledge of his devotedness to truth by his abandonment of the early imbibed convictions of his childhood—who from the Scriptures has learned that God is One—that God is Love—and who, in joining the sect everywhere spoken against, can have no motive but the desire of disseminating what he conscientiously believes to be the pure religion of the Saviour of the world. Welcome is he to our community. Successful and happy be his career!

The Committee close their Report in the hope that their labours will prove acceptable to the Association. They commend those labours, with the friends and subscribers to the Institution, to the blessing of that all-gracious Father whose sole worship they would promote, and whose unrivalled glory all their efforts will be given to advance ; convinced as they are, that the improvement and salvation of man is the object of all the dispensations of Heaven, and that the promotion of that improvement—the diffusion of the knowledge of that salvation—is the purest and noblest thanksgiving that can ascend to the Father of lights.”

NOTICE TO SUBSCRIBERS.

The Managers of the BIBLE CHRISTIAN beg leave to inform their readers and subscribers, that having found the present system of conducting the work both inconvenient to themselves, and in various respects disadvantageous to the publication, they have resigned the superintendence of it to the Rev. J. SCOTT PORTER; by whom it will in future be conducted: and in whose favour they solicit a continuance of that literary aid and public patronage which the BIBLE CHRISTIAN has hitherto received.

Belfast, Dec. 1833.

In reference to the foregoing announcement, the Rev. J. SCOTT PORTER begs leave to assure the readers of the BIBLE CHRISTIAN, that no consideration could have induced him to undertake the duty assigned him, had he not felt a conviction that the work is capable of effecting great good; and that to enable it to do so to the full extent of its capability, the undivided superintendence of one responsible Editor is necessary. He conceives that under the direction of one individual, though of humble pretensions, the work may be conducted with greater regularity of plan and unity of purpose, and consequently with greater advantage to the readers and to the public, than has been the case hitherto: and in this hope he has consented to assume its management. Several of the most able contributors to the former series, have already promised him their assistance, and he hopes to be able in a short time to increase their number. His own attention will of course be regularly devoted to the work so long as it continues in his hands. He trusts that by prompt attention to the communications of correspondents, and by care in superintending the printing of those articles that may be selected for publication, he will deserve a continuance of their support, and receive it.

The Subscribers to the Bible Christian are respectfully informed, that the work will be carried on in the same size, and at the same price as formerly; but that a considerable improvement will be made both in the quality of paper and in the typographical execution.

He requests that those persons who intend to subscribe for the new series, will send their names, as soon as may be convenient, to the EDITOR, at Mr. J. SMYTH'S Printing-Office, High-street, Belfast; whither Communications and Suggestions respecting the means of improving the work, or extending its usefulness, are to be forwarded.—The first number of the New Series will appear on Thursday, Feb. 6th, 1834.

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NO. XII.

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VOL. IV.

[FOR THE BIBLE CHRISTIAN.]

BARZILLAI.*

WHEN David, in his flight from Absalom, arrived at Mahanaim, Barzillai brought the furniture of his house, and the produce of his farm, "beds, and basons, and earthen vessels, and wheat and barley, and flour and parched corn, and beans and lentiles, and parched pulse, and honey and butter, and sheep, and cheese of kine, for David and for the people that were with him; for he said, the people are hungry, and weary, and thirsty in the wilderness." This liberality to the fugitive king driven to the very extent of his dominions by his rebellious and triumphant son, gave him a fair title to the favour of David, on the return of his prosperous fortune; nor was generosity of mind one of those qualities in which David was deficient. When Barzillai, therefore, attended the king on his return over Jordan, David said unto him, "Come thou over with me, and I will feed thee with me in Jerusalem." This would not only have kept him in the view of David, and placed him on the high road to preferment, but was itself in those days a distinguished honour and a substantial benefit. In this light the proposal was considered by Barzillai, who accordingly replied, "Thy servant will go a little way over Jordan with the king, but wherefore should thy servant be yet a burden to my Lord? and why should the king recompense me with such a reward?" So far the conduct of Barzillai is marked with liberality and courtesy. But he had more solid and weighty reasons for declining the invitation of David.

The ardent temper of the king, and the ambitious mind of his courtiers, no doubt, thought it never too late to begin a career of preferment, much less to accept of the fruit of former services; but this disinterested, wise,

*For the reign of David, see page 483.

and aged Gileadite was of a different opinion, and therefore he said to the king, "How long have I to live that I should go up with the king to Jerusalem?" It is too late to enter upon a new plan of life, and to mix with a society so different from that to which I have been accustomed in this remote province: nor could I reasonably expect, in the course of nature, long to enjoy your favours. At such an advanced period of life, ambition has lost its charms, avarice would be a preposterous passion, and as for luxury or sensual enjoyment, "can I discern between good and evil? Can thy servant taste what I eat or what I drink? Can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women?"

Barzillai had yet another reason which he reserved for the last, though the most important in itself, and probably that which weighed most in his own mind. Although he was so far advanced in years, he had a very important business upon his hands, which he had not yet commenced, and which would require the whole of his attention, and the little time that he had to spare. Perhaps it had been interrupted by the royal visit, and his pleasure at seeing David return in triumph to his capital and palace might be heightened by the satisfaction he felt at being left at leisure to arrange this serious and momentous affair. In short, Barzillai had *to die*. "Let thy servant, I pray thee, return back, that I may die in my own city, and be buried in the grave of my father and my mother."

This is a business that we all have to perform: it is one which, though in the act very brief and sudden, requires in the preparation much thought and time; which comprises, in one moment, a more important transaction than the whole of our lives together, and which few of us, perhaps, have more time to arrange than Barzillai; and yet is there one of us that is ready to give it the same preference to our worldly affairs, with the worthy Gileadite? Which of us can withdraw his thoughts from the most petty pecuniary concerns to contemplate this awful event? Which of those that are continually settling their books, arranging and balancing their accounts, can cheerfully abandon a mercantile speculation when its profits are ready to cover them with gold, to correct the errors and close the grand account of life?

Our times have abounded with exiled monarchs; which of their subjects who had devoted himself to his master during a hopeless exile, and lavished his fortune on his support, and to whom his prince should say, "Come now and live with me, in Stockholm, or Dresden, Paris, or Madrid;" would beg to be excused, because he had to die? "Let thy servant, I pray thee, return back, that I may die." Yet to die is the inevitable lot, the unwelcome end of all, and to prepare for it the important business neglected or postponed by all.

Having paid the respect that is so well due to this ungracious courtier, but most faithful and worthy friend of his king, let us now bestow a little attention on ourselves, and devote the remainder of our time to some reflexions on the various circumstances connected with a preparation for dying.

The best preparation for death is an innocent, useful, and benevolent life. There are many, it is to be hoped, especially among the female sex, the even tenor of whose lives has been seldom disturbed, either by temptation or trouble, by the cares of the world or the deceitfulness of riches or of sin, and who are prepared at any time to submit with resignation and content to the more sudden strokes of fate, or in the course of nature, calmly and cheerfully fall asleep in the Lord. As this degree of innocence and consequent composure cannot, however, be pretended to, without presumption, by the generality of mankind, it is evident that a degree of foresight, forethought, and preparation is necessary. Many indeed are precluded from this advantage by the suddenness of their dissolution, and this should be a conclusive motive for habitual circumspection, and a frequent review of the course of our conduct, and the state of our minds: but it is the lot of most men to fall victims to constitutional infirmities, chronical complaints, or acute distempers; and in these cases there is usually time for a serious consideration both of "the life that now is, and of that life which is to come."

The reason why few persons avail themselves in a suitable manner of the respite thus afforded them is, that they have never been in the habit of looking up to God, or inspecting their own hearts. They have, no doubt, attended on the offices of religion, and have received benefit both from public worship, and public

instruction ; but they have neglected secret meditation and private prayer. The consequence of this is, that when they are overtaken by disease, they are incapable of raising their thoughts to God, and still more of clothing their thoughts in words, without which they will, in general, be indistinct and confused.

It is much to be regretted, that in such cases the assistance of the ministers of religion is not more frequently resorted to. The cause of this neglect among Christians of our persuasion seems to be a superstitious dread of superstition. There is no doubt, that certain offices repeated to the dying, and certain ceremonies accompanying them, have been grossly abused ; and it is reasonable that rational Christians should be cautious of encouraging such notions and practices by their example : but there is no reason why they should continue in an irreligious state, at least destitute of devotion in the most solemn period of their lives, or that they should pass into the presence of the Almighty without one religious impression on the heart, or one devotional sentiment in their minds.

The ministers of religion ought not to be considered as personages who have some extraordinary influence in the future world, or are possessed of certain spells and charms, that will secure a safe conduct through fiends and spectres, and a happy reception in the world of spirits ; but they may justly expect to be considered as friends, who have studied the doctrines and precepts of the Gospel, who have been in the habit of personal devotion, and of leading the devotion of their people ; who have opportunities of inspecting the behaviour, and observing the demeanour of those, threatened with dissolution ; and who may have noted the prevailing errors and frailties of the patient himself. They are, therefore, qualified to administer advice and exhortation, and to assist the devotions of their flock. An early and habitual intercourse with a person of this description could not fail to be pleasing, and highly beneficial to one afflicted with disease, whether recovery or death should be the result. The conversation, advice, and devotions of such a person would be grateful, satisfactory and composing, when called for at a proper season ; but when delayed, till the disease has taken an alarming turn, they only add to the alarm, and increase

the perturbation of mind. The visit is, in many cases, equally distressing to the minister and the patient; and it is extremely difficult to guard against exciting irrational hopes on the one hand; and on the other, plunging the patient into despair: thus sporting with the truth and purity of religion, or with the feelings of humanity: and this at a period when little effect can be produced on the unhappy subject of his exhortations, by severity; and much evil may be done to the hearers by an unwarrantable lenity. On such occasions, indeed, the sick person is too often either passive, or insensible.

There is great difference between a death-bed repentance, and the calm and pious meditations, that may be indulged during a protracted distemper: and between the desperate and frantic agitation of a heinous, habitual sinner, and the rational hopes and devout resignation of a frail and contrite Christian.

No reason can be assigned, why in such a state the understanding may not be informed and corrected; the heart softened and mellowed; the faith strengthened, and the devotion warmed. Practical errors may be remedied, and injuries redressed. Kindness and forgiveness may be cultivated: malice, revenge and envy repressed: and the whole of past life may be reviewed, and its frailties and sins repented of. In such a state, effectual resolutions may be formed for the conduct of future life, and no situation can be better adapted to such exercises. These occupations, accompanied with the exercise of patience under suffering, resignation to the will of God, and faith in his promises through the Lord Jesus, are surely rational, and, through his grace and mercy may be effectual preparations for death, or for life, if such should be the Divine will. A wise man might wish for an opportunity for such employments, and a pious soul would delight in them.

Now, all these beneficial operations may be facilitated by prayer, and there is no season more suitable to this exercise than sickness; none in which we have more to ask for: none, in which the mind is better prepared for asking, or consequently more likely to receive; especially if we begin betimes, before the distemper seizes on the understanding, benumbs our sensibility, or distracts us with apprehensions.

As our existence consists of two parts, time and eternity, so all our occupations and duties have a reference to the one or the other. As in every other period of life, we should attend both to our temporal and our spiritual condition; so should we include considerations of both kinds in our preparation for death. As it is our duty to be always prepared for dying by a virtuous and religious life, so should we keep our worldly affairs in such order, that we may never be taken by surprise. We should carefully provide against being distracted by temporal concerns in our last illness; and equally on our guard, lest through negligence, we may injure, or fail in duty and affection, to those who have any claim upon either. This "setting of our houses in order," as it is styled in Scripture, should be the deliberate and dispassionate business of that season, when our faculties are in vigour; when our various affections and obligations are duly poised; and when we have leisure to arrange our affairs in such a manner as to give most satisfaction and least trouble to all who shall be concerned.

This is required not less by justice to others than by regard to our own peace of mind, especially when confined to the bed of languishing: and the consciousness of it will even mitigate our disease, and contribute to our recovery. But should this business be delayed till our last illness, as too often happens, we should then consider it as a matter worthy of our serious and early attention. We should be anxious to "fulfil all righteousness," and not to leave any duty unperformed when we depart from this life. We should then, under the awful impressions and enlarged views naturally resulting from our situation, hanging between two worlds, with our relation to both under our eye, extend our thoughts beyond every mean and sordid consideration; and elevate them above the influence of every vain, partial or resentful affection of the mind. We should reflect merely on what is right, what is due to man, and what is expected by God. After every claim of justice on the part of strangers has been satisfied, we should study to alleviate, as much as possible, the ill consequences of our departure to our families and relatives: and provide as far as in our power, that the most helpless shall enjoy, after our decease, the same comforts, the same be-

nefits of education, the same protection to innocence, as during our lives. As it will then be too late to enter on a new plan of life, or course of conduct, we should the more anxiously study to prevent any ill effects, that may be likely to ensue from our errors or omissions in any department of our former conduct.

There is one legacy in particular, that we are bound to leave to our posterity. It is said, that the Lord "Jesus having loved his disciples, loved them to the end;" and this love he testified by the valuable admonitions, advice and exhortations, with which he concluded his ministry and life. In like manner, it becomes us all, with our last words to confirm the faith, the virtue and the mutual affection of those, whom we leave behind; to exhort them to add to their faith, virtue; and to both, patience and brotherly kindness. In particular, it is highly incumbent on all, who have, at any inconsiderate period of their lives, either by word or deed, conduct or conversation, indicated a sceptical or unbelieving turn of mind, to embrace the opportunity of their last moments, to erase and deface the impressions they may have made on their families, or others, and to exhort them earnestly to a sober, righteous and godly life. "When thou shalt be converted, strengthen the brethren." The efficacy of these exhortations will be greatly increased by a contrite and penitential expression of his own errors in these respects, on the part of the dying. The superstition, spiritual tyranny, and disingenuous casuistry, to which auricular confession has given rise, has justly made that practice odious to Protestant ears; but there is no rational objection to such a penitential and edifying declaration as I have just described: and there are also many cases in which every man may with advantage take the opinion and advice of a prudent and pious friend, or of his minister, on many passages in his life. Such a practice would enable the person consulted to place his conduct in a truer point of view than that in which it appeared to the party himself: and to point out duties resulting from the subject of consultation, which might never have occurred to one under the influence of self-interest or passion. "Confess your faults one to another: and pray for one another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." I have hi-

therto treated of that preparation of spirit, which is due to ourselves ; and of the regard which we should evince, in our last moments, to the comfort and edification of our posterity and friends. There is only one subject remaining on which I think it expedient to offer some remarks.

When all equitable demands have been liberally satisfied ; and the rational comforts of relations suitably provided for, it is right to consider whether the surplus property of the affluent may not be in part disposed of so as to perpetuate the good effects of their personal exertions, and to secure the permanence and advancement of those important interests, which during life they have had most at heart. The subjects which may claim this rank in our estimation, are religion, charity and education.

It is natural and laudable, that we should wish posterity to derive advantage from those institutions, from which we have received benefit ourselves ; and it would be lamentable to think, that any of them should fall into decay. With what zeal do patriots exert themselves for the preservation and perpetuity of a free constitution of government ! “ Be thou perpetual,” is their last wish and prayer. It is indeed only under the influence of such a hope, that any human institution is worthy of our love or veneration in any high degree. How much would our ardour be damped, if we could suppose that the constitution of our country, its venerable judicial establishments, its noble foundations for charity and education, and the Christian religion itself, were only to endure for the life of man, and perish with the present generation !

If these be our sentiments, it is surely becoming in us, not to leave it to chance or caprice ; to a casual decay of funds, or the veering of the popular opinion, whether those religious or charitable institutions, in which we have found our consolation, or placed our pride, should crumble into dust ; or whether those establishments erected for the education of the poor, which provide for future generations, should themselves perish through our neglect, and charity herself die for want of alms : pine in her sumptuous mansion, and famish amid her children.

It is true, that many bequests for the support of religion, charity and education, have been abused; but it is also true, that these countries are covered with magnificent, venerable and efficient monuments of private munificence; that even those parts of the United kingdom which are least in need of such assistance, are essentially served by establishments founded by individuals: that this country stands peculiarly in want of such aid, being destitute of any national support for the poor: and that even those foundations, which have fallen into decay, in consequence of the perversion of their funds, had long continued to answer the ends of their erection, and the expectations of their benevolent founders. If they were to look from the mansions of the blessed, they would be far from regretting their liberality. How much less should we make use of these failures as pretexts for withholding our support!

It must also be acknowledged, that many of these splendid donations have been the effect of vanity, and many attended with cruelty and injustice to the families of the deceased: and I cannot mention such motives and conduct without reprobation: but when grants are made without injury to others, and from a pure desire of pleasing God by serving man, I cannot doubt that such acts are meritorious in the sight of our Heavenly Father, and well pleasing to our gracious and benevolent Redeemer.

ERASMUS.

TO THE REV. SAMUEL DILL.

(*Concluded.*)

DEAR SIR,—Angels are the first who announce the birth and conception of our Saviour; but it must be confessed, if the doctrine of a trinity be true, they were very ill instructed, or else very unfaithful messengers; since they make no mention of what was the most miraculous circumstance in that event. They announce the birth of a being under extraordinary circumstances. In answer to the very natural question of Mary, “How is that possible?” they reply, “the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee.” But there is an event connected with this, on the Athanasian system, infinitely more wonderful and important, respecting

which they never give the slightest intimation, either to Joseph, to Mary, to the shepherds, or to any being in existence; and that was, that Mary should bear about with her in her womb, and should afterwards give birth to the very eternal God who fills all space! Compared with this, all other miraculous occurrences sink down to the rate of mere ordinary events; and yet respecting this, the angels are most unaccountably, I had almost said, unfaithfully silent. This omission, on the part of the angels, of any mention of the supreme Deity of the child Jesus, is not a little ominous for the Athanasian cause. Can we account for it, by supposing that the angel Gabriel was a little tinctured with *Unitarianism*, and that he wilfully suppressed a truth, which Trinitarians tell us, is the first and most essential in the scheme of our salvation? If not, then indeed I should tremble for the Athanasian system; for surely the angel Gabriel was as likely to know the truth as any self-styled orthodox Divine; yet he never gives the slightest hint of the birth of God; nay, the language he employs is utterly subversive of such an opinion.

Trinitarians maintain that Jesus Christ is the very eternal God. But Jesus was born of Mary. You admit, therefore, that the very eternal God was born of Mary. Now here is the language which the angel Gabriel employs in speaking of this being; "That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Had the angel known that Jesus was the very eternal God, would he have called him "*a holy thing*?" Is this the language in which even a pious man would speak of the ever blessed God? How much less could it be used by one of those holy and exalted spirits who stand continually in his presence, and who delight to do his will? I challenge you to produce a single instance in the whole Bible, in which such language is ever applied to the Almighty. At p. 60, you appear to limit the words, "holy thing," to the human nature of Christ, *conceived* of Mary, and which you tell us is not a person; but in this you must be mistaken, for the angel does not call that which would be *conceived* "a holy thing," but that which "*shall be born*," and that, even you admit, is "both the deity and the manhood" of the Lord Jesus.

But as if to guard against the possibility of the Athanasian heresy, the highest title given to Jesus by the

angel, is not in the language of trinitarians, the very eternal God, but the *son* of the Highest, the *son* of God; clearly making a distinction between God, the highest, and his son; and establishing the fact, that he is not God; that he is not the Highest; but only the son of the Supreme God. One thing is plain, if there is but one God, and Jesus is the son of God, both of which the Scriptures affirm, he is not the God, of whom he is the son; and if he be God, then there must be two Gods. Not only the omission of all notice of the Supreme Deity of the Lord Jesus by the angel, but the language employed is totally inconsistent with the doctrine of a trinity.

But again, let us suppose the doctrine of the trinity to be true, and then see, according to the narrative of the miraculous conception given by Mathew and Luke, by whom it is that Christ Jesus our Lord is begotten. You agree with me in rejecting the doctrine of eternal generation, and you know we can defy our opponents to produce, in the whole compass of the word of God, a single instance in which it is stated that Christ was begotten, other than that to which the narrative here refers. Now Matthew states distinctly, that what was conceived in Mary "was of the Holy Ghost;" that is, he begat or produced the conception. If then the Holy Ghost be a person distinct from the Father, and every way equal to him, then Jesus Christ is the only begotten of the Holy Ghost, if Mathew has told the truth; and then according to trinitarians, John must have told a falsehood, for he expressly affirms that he is the only begotten of the Father. Luke says, in reply to the question of Mary, that she shall conceive, and bring forth, because "the Holy Ghost shall come upon her, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow her." But on the trinitarian hypothesis, you have thus two persons concerned in producing conception, that is, in begetting: but to one of them, the Holy Ghost, a distinct priority is ascribed, and that to the person, whose begotten the son is never said to be. Such is the confusion and absurdity which follow from the Athanasian doctrine! And if you say, this can only apply to the human nature of Christ, which is the only nature, according to you, in which he is begotten, then on your own shewing he is not the only begotten of the Father,

but of the Holy Ghost : and the Apostle John and you are thus again at variance. Besides, on your principle, Jesus Christ is not "the only begotten son of God." The expression, son of God, you tell us, is a personal title, including both the divine and human natures ; but the human nature is not a person, and therefore could not have this title applied to it. But in his divine nature, Christ, according to you, is not begotten, and his human is no person ; therefore the Son of God, is not the only begotten ; and when John asserts this, as he does, John iii. 18, according to you, he declares a falsehood. You thus see again, that the doctrine of the trinity, however explained, necessarily falsifies the New Testament,

Nor, is this all. The language employed by the angel in Luke's Gospel, Luke i. 35, is utterly subversive of the Athanasian doctrine. That dogma teaches that there are three persons in all respects perfectly equal. Now language cannot more clearly contradict this alleged equality, than do the expressions here employed. "The power of the HIGHEST shall overshadow thee." There is then a Being who is the highest, and that is admitted by you to be the Father. Now, this character is given to the Father, either correctly, or incorrectly. If incorrectly, the fault rests with the angel Gabriel, who should have been better instructed in the nature of the message he came to deliver, and in its announcement, should have employed more correct language. But if the angel has faithfully and correctly executed his commission, and has employed an expression, justly descriptive of the unrivalled supremacy of the Father, then the doctrine of the trinity falls to the ground, overturned, not by the tongue or pen of man, but of an angel. For if the Father be the *Highest*, then he can have no *equals*. It is too palpable an absurdity, to affirm of one person, that he is highest, and next to affirm, that two others are as high as he, and yet this absurdity your doctrine charges upon an angel. Now, the character Highest, Most high, is both here, and elsewhere, given to the Father ; but I defy you to produce a single instance from the New Testament, in which it is, either by man or angel, applied to any but the Father. Now, sir, I trust I have made it pretty clear, that the "satisfactory recognition of the all-important doctrine" of the

trinity here afforded, is either a renouncement of that doctrine, *or a rejection of the Bible* ; for I heartily concur with you, that there is not *a more* satisfactory recognition of this doctrine, in the whole volume of Divine Revelation.

When you, and other followers of St. Athanasius, speak of the "supreme deity of Jesus Christ," and of an "in-dwelling God" in his human nature, I wonder if you have ever asked yourselves, what deity you mean? How many deities there are, and which of them, you think, is connected with the manhood of Jesus Christ? However heretical you may regard my opinions, I can most sincerely assure you of my firm and undoubted conviction, of an in-dwelling deity in Christ Jesus our Lord. I believe firmly with an Apostle, "that in him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." This I interpret by another passage of Scripture: that "God, even his God, had anointed him with the oil of gladness above his fellows." But on this authority, I must believe, that there is a God who did anoint him for his office. I have Scripture authority for saying, that "verily the less is blessed of the greater," and I must also believe, that he had fellows, or equals, above whom he is thus raised, in consequence of his being anointed. But I cannot believe with the trinitarian, that these equals are his own Father and the Holy Ghost; for then I would be obliged to swallow the absurdity, that they could anoint him, and raise him above themselves. If you ask me then, what deity do I believe resides in Christ Jesus, I will allow the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews to answer the question for me. Hebrews i. 1, 2. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners, spake in times past, unto the fathers, *in* (not by, as you will at once perceive is the correct translation, by consulting the original) in the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us *in* his son." There the writer expressly asserts, that it is the very same God who spoke in the prophets, that is now speaking to us, in his son. Or I will allow Christ Jesus himself to answer the question for me, John xiv. 10. "The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself, but the Father that *dwelleth in me*, he doeth the works." There is the express declaration of Christ, that the Father whom Peter asserts also to be his God, dwells

in him. When you speak of the supreme Deity of Jesus Christ, is this the deity you mean? If so, we are agreed, for I hold the faith of the supreme and unrivalled deity of the Father. Christ our lord declares, that by this deity he taught, wrought miracles, judged, and finally, the scriptures disclose, was raised from the dead. Or do you mean, as a follower of St. Athanasius, that he has a proper deity of his own, and that consequently there are two deities dwelling in him, the Father, by whom he teaches and works miracles, and his own proper deity, by whom he does *nothing*? Christ expressly declares that the father dwelleth in him, and that by him he performs his miraculous works, but never gives the slightest intimation of a supreme deity of his own; on the contrary, always proclaims his subordination to the father, his entire dependance upon him in all things, and that he does all not for the glory of his own deity, but that of his father. Would it not be a little curious if Athanasian divines should be able to discover a deity in Christ of which he himself never knew?

There is one other topic to which I shall advert in this review of your pamphlet, and so conclude my somewhat lengthened remarks. It will be found p. 61. "To give personal titles to his (Christ's) human nature, abstracted from his divine, is of the most dangerous humanitarian tendency. It is the very fraud by which humanitarians contrive to establish and extend their delusive system." Now it may be that all this is very correct, as applied to the humanitarian. That he should give personal titles, and even ascribe personal acts, to a being whom he considers a person, in the only nature he admits him to possess, is not only reasonable, but the contrary would, in him, be most unreasonable and absurd. But will you tell me why it is so dangerous to ascribe "*personal titles* to that which is no person," and yet you and other trinitarians apprehend no danger from ascribing personal acts to "the human nature of Christ, abstracted from his divine;" nay, such as are utterly inconsistent with his Supreme Deity. This is the very fraud by which *trinitarians* contrive to establish and extend their delusive system, and wanting this absurd and unscriptural foundation, the doctrine could not stand a single hour. It is surely a greater absur-

dity to ascribe *personal acts* to that which is no person than to give it *personal titles*; and yet this is the uniform subterfuge of all Trinitarians. Let me illustrate. You are asked, who is your saviour? You answer, Jesus Christ, combining the human and divine natures in one person. You are asked, how is he a Saviour? You answer, by the sufferings and death he voluntarily endured, he has offered up himself a full and infinite sacrifice to satisfy his *father's wrath*, and make an infinite atonement for the sins of his people. Now, who suffered and died? Was it the one person, that is "both the human and divine natures?" Did your God die upon the cross, and are you believers in a *dying* and a *dead* God? This you dare not affirm. Who then offered up an infinite satisfaction for sin? Not the *deity* of Jesus Christ, which alone could be regarded as infinite; for then you have a *dead God*—but his *human nature* only, which according to you is "*no person*;" then *no person* died upon the cross, and you have *no person* for a Saviour; and as "the human is only the *infinitely inferior* of the two natures," it can never make an *infinite atonement*; and we come at last to this, that you have only a dying man for your Saviour. God can neither suffer nor die. If he can, he is not only dependent upon something exterior himself for his happiness, but for his very existence. To suffer voluntarily is a *personal act*. It cannot be the act of Jesus Christ, as God, and can therefore only belong to his human nature, "*which is no person*" and thus you are guilty of the absurdity of ascribing a personal act to that which is no person.

Again, to pray is a personal act. It is to ask some favour from another, to entreat from him something which he possesses and we want. But God never prays, and cannot pray. How could he? From whom would he ask a favour, and what does he want? If Christ, then, be the very eternal God, he cannot pray. Yet Christ has spent whole nights in prayer, and repeatedly supplicated favours from another. "Father, save me from that hour." "If it is possible, let this cup pass from me, nevertheless, not as I will but as thou wilt." Here, then, is a being who not only supplicates a favour,—which as God he could not do,—but who has a will of his own, which he subjects to the will of another, his Father. Now the whole of this is the conduct of

a person; yet all of this you will only affirm of the *human nature* of Christ; and this, you tell us, is *no person*. Such are the contradictions and absurdities into which Trinitarian writers plunge themselves! For the support of a favourite but unscriptural dogma, they are obliged to renounce even their own acknowledged principles.

I conclude, my dear sir, as I commenced, with every degree of respect for your character and worth. I only regret that after having so ably exposed an unscriptural scholastic subtlety, you did not at once free yourself from the trammels of another, still more unscriptural. Trusting that the day of your conversion to a simpler and more intelligible creed is not far distant, I remain, sincerely and respectfully,
yours, &c., WM. GLENDY.

Ballycarry, Nov. 15th, 1833.

THE FAITH AND CONSTITUTION OF AN APOSTOLIC CHURCH.

THE brightest ornaments of the Christian Church, whether clergy or laity, have always maintained, that there are few essential articles of Faith. This opinion they ground upon the declarations of our Lord himself. Love to God and love to man compose the essence and main object of both Revelations. "On these two hang all the law and the prophets." Hear, said Moses, "the Lord thy God is one Lord; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might," and "thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." The Prophets also proclaim the same truth: "What doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly before thy God?"

Thus, too, when the Lawyer asked our Lord: "What shall I do, to inherit eternal life?" he replied, "What is written in the law? how readest thou?" and when he answered: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength and with all thy mind," Jesus told him, that he had answered right. "This do," said he, "and thou shalt live." The Apostles speak the same language.

St. Peter, after enjoining virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity, adds, "If ye do these things, ye shall never fail : for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." This, he tells them, should be the strain of his own preaching : " Wherefore, I will not be negligent to put you in remembrance of these things. Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up, by reminding you."

As " he, who cometh to God, must believe, that he exists, and is the rewarder of those, who diligently seek him ;" so he who cometh to Christ must believe, that he was sent by God. Thus our Lord, in his last prayer, sums up the faith of his Apostles in these words : " They have known surely, that I came out from thee and have believed, that thou didst send me : " and thus Philip baptized the Treasurer of the Queen of Ethiopia, on a simple declaration, that he believed, " that Jesus was the Son of God." This was their ordinary practice. It does not appear, that they ever used the form of baptizing " in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," as we do ; and as it was prescribed by their master ; not, I suppose, thinking it essential, and certainly not to imply the doctrine of the Trinity, or they would not have omitted it. The mention of Baptism is frequent, both in the Acts and the Epistles ; but the only form that occurs is " in the name of Jesus." When the multitude at Pentecost cried out to Peter and the Apostles : " Men and Brethren, what shall we do ? he said : " Repent and be baptized in the name of Christ, for the remission of sins ; and ye shall receive the Holy Ghost." The disciples, at Ephesus had not even heard of the Holy Ghost ; and were baptized by Paul " in the name of the Lord Jesus." From this we may see, how essentials and fundamentals have been multiplied since the Apostolic times. How cheering and consolatory is it, in such times as these that we live in, to hear these gracious words from the mouths of Moses and the Prophets, Jesus Christ and his Apostles ! How refreshing to one who has suffered himself to be perplexed and puzzled, alarmed and terrified by the gloomy horrors of Calvinistic creeds !

Supported by such authorities, I do not hesitate to declare, that every man is a Christian who believes, that Jesus was commissioned to teach the will of God; and every man, a good Christian, who conforms to the will of God, "and worships him in spirit and in truth." Instead of following that illiberal and selfish practice, which has prevailed for so many generations, of limiting the number of the elect, and excluding all from the title of Christians, who do not subscribe to their symbols, and say Amen to their prayers or their curses, we would gladly enlarge the pale of the Church, and, by reducing the Gospel to its original simplicity, "bring many souls to Christ." If any man will smother the Evangelical piety and morality under a cumbrous load of metaphysical doctrines, or dress it out in gaudy trinkets and glaring ornaments, I lament the gloominess of his bigotry, and the frivolity of his superstition; but while he acknowledges the foundation of his religion to be a belief that Jesus was specially authorized and empowered to reveal the will of Heaven, I readily own him to be a Christian, and embrace him as a brother. Belief in the mission of Christ, including the necessity of repentance and holiness for obtaining the favour of God and in the reality of a state of future retribution, is the grand essential, which entitles a man to the name of Christian. Upon all other doctrinal and ritual points, we may differ without forfeiting that title, or endangering our acceptance with God.

We may be assured, that the principal objects of Revelation are those doctrines and precepts which are most clearly and repeatedly inculcated in it. These are, Morality and Piety; and these compose the bulk of our Saviour's discourses, and of his Apostle's preaching and writing. But there are many other topics of religious Faith, to which every disciple is bound to give a serious and devout consideration, and certain services and ordinances, which he can neither consistently nor safely omit; for they are all, parts of a divine revelation, and all intended and calculated to prepare him for the world to come; and therefore, these also are distinctly and fully declared. These doctrines and institutions are of great importance in giving weight and authority to maxims of piety and virtue, and preventing mankind from relapsing into their former state of ignorance and

vice. They contribute to support the weak, confirm the wavering, and encourage the perseverance of the strong. There are also other points, which do not occupy a large space in the New Testament; but are comprized in a few texts interspersed through the Apostolical writings. These refer to the nature and enjoyments of the future world, the punishments and sufferings to be endured by impenitent offenders, the manner of the general resurrection, and other mysterious subjects. These are not brought forward into the foreground, and are often expressed in figurative language. They, however, all furnish an instructive employment for pious minds, and therefore every good Christian is thankful for such subjects of meditation. "*All Scripture is profitable for reproof and correction, for doctrine and instruction in righteousness:*" but every part is not essential to salvation; and we must distinguish between the essence and the form, the object and the means.

With respect to these auxiliary doctrines, men are in danger of running into two opposite errors. We too often meet with men disposed to reject every doctrine, which does not appear to them, to be either a self-evident truth, or plainly calculated to produce a moral effect upon the heart, and this, though they know that many men of superior capacity, deeper thought, and equally inclined to virtue, hold these principles to be true in themselves, and feel, that they greatly conduce to the amelioration of their hearts. Some of these, having taken up prejudices against all revealed religion, and supernatural interposition, reject altogether that system, which countenances and depends upon them; and thus many frivolous and unthinking people treat Christianity itself with scorn. But as a wise and pious man may perceive, that many precepts of morality, many principles in philosophy, many doctrines in religion, and finally, many laws for the government of society and rules for the conduct of life, are not only true, but fitted to produce the best effects on the soul and the heart, the understanding and conduct, though ignorant and thoughtless people turn them into ridicule; why may not our Heavenly Father know, that many tenets and ordinances of religion may tend to our improvement, though we cannot discern their efficacy!

If a parent or teacher knows to a certainty, that a certain mode of education is useful and even necessary for a child, though the pupil can neither discover nor be persuaded of its beneficial tendency, why may not the Almighty know, that a certain course of discipline is necessary for us, though we may not? Is it, that one philosopher is more exalted above another, or a preceptor more elevated above his scholar, than God above both the philosopher and preceptor? A prudent and well-disposed man, therefore, will not undervalue any precepts or appointments that are clearly revealed, merely because he does not yet see their necessity or usefulness; conscious, that things may conduce to his well-being and edification, though he cannot see the manner in which they will operate.

The error opposed to this is, too hasty and inconsiderate an adoption of opinions on the faith of individuals, sects or churches. A conscientious man will not readily impute any doctrine to Christianity, merely because it has been adopted by any religious party; but will "search the Scriptures" for himself; nor will he, in any case, adopt such immoral principles as shock his own native feelings or the unanimous sentiments of mankind; much less those which derogate from the mercy, justice and holiness of God: one such erroneous notion may involve him in perpetual ignorance and error. A hasty adoption of the Trinity, may involve him in false ideas of the nature of God, and ignorance of the divine unity, the corner-stone of true religion. A misconception of a text concerning the foreknowledge of God may contaminate his sentiments as to mercy and justice, and entangle him inextricably in the nets of predestination, irrational and unprincipled reprobation, and election, and other points dependent on these, as long as he lives. He may never recover honourable ideas of divine Providence, and never more be able to "love God with all his heart." He will not only stray irretrievably from the right road, so as never to regain it; but he will imagine that every one who differs from him, is in a fatal delusion, hated of God, and lost to all eternity: and how then can he "love his neighbour as himself?" What a miserable and contemptible state of mind is this!

I have been led into this strain of reflection by the prevalent practice of multiplying articles of faith, and

ascribing to each of them the character of a fundamental doctrine, essential to salvation, and denouncing all who cannot believe it, as "common and unclean;" heretics, deists, outcasts, reprobates, or whatever other name, their spleen and bile may dictate. This practice has been so general, that I know not of any established church, or any sect, which has adopted a Confession of Faith, as a mark of uniformity, that could consistently acknowledge me to be a Christian; or according to whose dogmas I could hope for salvation. But this is nothing; for what am I? The same may be said of the most illustrious members of every church; the most eminent prelates of the national establishment, and the most distinguished divines among the Presbyterians of Scotland and Ireland. Their principles differed so widely from the articles, to which they gave their solemn assent, the confessions which they were compelled to subscribe, and the creeds, which they habitually recited, in the presence of God and the face of the Church, as to exclude them, as far as words could go, from communion and the hope of salvation, in those very churches, which they adorned by their example, and edified by their doctrine; and to whom they dispensed the Holy Sacraments. It is notorious, that this is the case with very many ministers at the present day.

Most of us have heard of Tillotson and Clarke, Paley and Law; of their unbelief in the leading doctrines of their church; of their evasions and prevarications, of their subterfuges and contrivances to excuse a bad conscience, and their confession that they "could not afford to keep a good one." Which of these, or of numbers who have followed their example, could stand up with Paul and say, "I trust, I have a good conscience. I have exercised myself in this, to have always a good conscience toward God?"

It grieves me to recount these names, these venerable names; and I am ashamed as well as grieved to recall to mind those among our own brethren, who still submit to an ignominious servitude to their equals, who cloak their fears under the garb of hypocrisy, who in their daily ministrations, study to conceal, instead of "declaring the whole counsel of God," and those who stood up to profess a lie in the face of a solemn assembly, and profane the name of God in his more immedi-

ate presence. But I say no more; let them sink into an inglorious oblivion. But this much I think due to the cause of liberality, truth and conscience, and to the honour of their friends. It would ill become any who are at ease, and in a great measure exempt from temptations and trials, to triumph over those who have fallen, or who still linger in the quarters of the enemy.

I would rather glory in our brethren, "who have kept the faith, and fought the good fight, for whom there is laid up a crown of glory, that shall never fade." These "have obtained a good witness," and testimony. These it behooves us to comfort and support. "Remember those who are in bonds, and those who suffer adversity and are cruelly treated, as being yourselves also in the body."

Were I to go beyond these, "time would fail me to tell" of our predecessors, in these kingdoms, of various denominations, "of whom the world was not worthy," who counted their prospects of wealth and dignity as "loss for the sake of Christ;" who literally abandoned "houses, and brethren and sisters, and father and mother, and wife and children, and lands for sake of the Gospel." I speak of Emlyn and Pierce, of Robinson and Lindsey, and their numerous followers, and that noble band, who left the tents of sin, and formed the Presbytery of Antrim, "whose faith following," the Remonstrants "have now obtained a good report."

Now, what is the effect of this duplicity and hypocrisy on the ignorant and unstable? Surely it must leave them in a strange state of doubt and distraction. But above all, can we reflect, for a moment, on the encouragement and pretexts, which the enormity of the doctrines, and the unbelief and hypocrisy of the clergy afford to the enemies of our religion, without the deepest regret for those unhappy people, who are thus confirmed in their infidelity, by those who should establish their faith? Though we must condemn the perverseness of unbelievers in looking any where for the genuine doctrines of Christ, in preference to the Gospel, how can we excuse those who thus contribute to their delusion? By such examples have many learned men, of the most accurate knowledge and powerful talents, been seduced, first into Popery, and afterwards into infidelity. Even the renowned Chillingworth was recon-

ciled, as it is called, for a time, to the Church of Rome ; but after recovering from his delusion, he published his noble defence of Protestantism, in his book entitled, “ the Bible the religion of Protestants,” from which I shall recite one passage, as well adapted to our present purpose: “ Let all men believe the Scripture, and *that only*, and endeavour to believe it in the true sense, and require no more of others ; and they shall find this not only a better, but the only means to repress heresy, and restore unity ; for he that believes the Scripture sincerely, and endeavours to believe it in the true sense, cannot possibly be a heretic : and if no more than this were required of any man to make him capable of the Church’s communion, then all men so qualified, though they were different in opinion, yet, notwithstanding any such difference, must be of necessity one communion.”

In this practice of free inquiry, we are encouraged by several passages of Holy Writ. “ I speak unto wise (or sensible) men ; judge ye what I say ” — “ Why even of yourselves, judge ye not what is right : Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind—Search the Scriptures.” “ Those of Berea were more noble than those of Thessalonica, in that they searched the Scriptures daily, to see, whether what the Apostles said was true : ” and we shall be more worthy than the adherents to articles, confessions and overtures, if we do so too. Let not any sophistical speculations shake *our* faith ; or trouble the tranquillity of our minds. Let a simple belief of the Divine authority of our Lord be the foundation of our religion, let us build upon this the assured persuasion of a life to come, prepared for the righteous : let us be careful to foster faith and hope by the exercise of charity, and by a diligent and assiduous attendance on the services and ordinances of the Gospel, and by a contemplation of those sublime and consolatory truths, which abound in the Holy Scriptures.

The only principle on which Protestants can justify their separation from the Church of Rome, is, that they disclaim all human authority, and adopt the Bible as the sole rule of faith and worship. This, therefore, is generally maintained in controversies with the Romanists ; but most inconsistently abandoned, in their differences with each other. Although they refuse in theory

to submit to human authority, yet in practice, they appeal to such a number of general councils, or to such synods and assemblies of divines, as best answer their purpose ; and though they make no claim to infallibility, they establish certain creeds, confessions and articles of faith as unquestionable, and insist, that, according to them, Scripture ought to be interpreted. They renounce infallibility, but assert, that they never err. The Catholics say, they never can err ; and the Protestants, that they never do. The glory of Protestantism consists in a total separation of the Gospel from all earthly mixture and contamination, and the emancipation of the kingdom of Heaven from the kingdoms of this world. In the degree in which this is effected, do we comply with the commands of Christ, whose kingdom is not of this world ; and as far as men retain their regard for Creeds and Confessions, formed in periods of darkness, and supported either by power or bigotry, so far do they nourish a Popish spirit, and so far is their Reformation imperfect.

If, then, there be any denomination of Christians who utterly reprobate the dictates of man with respect to the service of God, and follow no guide in their faith and worship but the divine word ; these are so far the best Protestants, and the most genuine followers of Christ. Their adherence to this principle is the best criterion of their *faith* ; and their conformity to it in their worship, as the surest criterion of its purity. It becomes, therefore, a matter of interesting inquiry to every society of Christians, how far they conform to this rule ; for, if they can conform to our Lord's direction, to prefer the word of God to every other authority, and admit no other rule of belief or conduct in religion, they will avoid the great occasions of error ; and any mistakes into which they may fall, through a misapprehension of the meaning of the divine word, will be of a very pardonable kind, provided they do not originate in wilful prevarication and insincerity.

To ascertain this point, it will be necessary to review the principal branches of our religious conduct. I speak of the Antrim Presbytery and the Remonstrant Synod. As to the behaviour of individuals, we have all great reason for humiliation and repentance ; but at present we are to confine our thoughts to our conduct

as religious societies. If, upon such a review, we shall discover that we have deviated from the scriptural model, we ought never to consider the period as too late for reformation; but if we find that we are in conformity with the directions of Christ, and the canons of the Apostles, we shall have cause to glory in our non-conformity to canons of human invention: we shall be confirmed in our principles, and shall see the great importance of a well-principled dissent from all establishments, and all human systems, inasmuch as it is a solemn and perpetual protest in behalf of Christ, against ecclesiastical innovations and impositions, and a permanent testimony to the simplicity of the gospel.

It does not appear that any exception can be taken to the manner of our association. As the primitive converts agreed to meet in one place for the purpose of social worship, so have our congregations, without any other test or articles of faith than the words of our Lord and his chosen followers, united for the same end. The constituent parts of an apostolic congregation were the Ministers, and such a number of the laity as could conveniently assemble in one place. The Ministers were indiscriminately styled Bishops or Overseers, and Elders or Presbyters; and of these some "laboured in word and doctrine," and others ruled or regulated the affairs of the society; and such is the simple constitution of our churches. The number of Ministers depended on the size of the congregation, or church, for they have the same signification in scripture; the difficulty of procuring assistance from other societies, in case of accident, and the probability of frequent disasters in times of persecution; for the Ministers were the first marks at which the enemies of the Church directed their malice.

As Jesus told his apostles that the workman was worthy of his meat, so in many places Paul asserts, that ministers should not be occupied with worldly cares, but be supported by the people; and though he claimed no such privilege himself, this was occasioned by the weak state of the church, and an apprehension that malicious persons might cast an imputation of avarice on his conduct, and thus the progress of the gospel be impeded; but he expressly asserted his right.

These ministers or elders were originally ordained or set apart for the exercise of their functions by the Apostles ; and the same power was entrusted to their confidential assistants. Thus Paul directs Titus to do so in these words : “ for this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee.” After the death of the apostles, they were chosen by the people, and ordained by the prayers and imposition of hands of the remaining elders of that congregation. This we find to have been the case in one instance at least during the lives of the apostles, for Paul mentions “ the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery ” as the form used at the ordination of Timothy.

These Ministers, bishops, or elders were the only officers essential to the constitution of the primitive church. It is true that Deacons were appointed in many congregations, whose business it was to distribute the money collected for the poor, and to provide the bread and wine for the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Thus Paul and Timothy direct their joint Epistles to the Saints or Christian people, at Philippi with the Bishops and Deacons, and in First Timothy their qualifications are distinctly enumerated. The appointment of such officers is, in many cases, highly expedient even now ; but that they were not essential to the formation of a church, is evident from the account of their first appointment.

The Apostles directed the people to elect “ seven men of good report,” and “ when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.” Hence we may presume that ministers were usually appointed with the consent of the congregation, even during the lives of the Apostles. From the narrative of this transaction in the sixth chapter of Acts, it appears, that the institution of Deacons was not an original design, but became expedient on two accounts ; first, because the disciples had become so numerous, and the number of the poor was so much encreased, that the distribution of the collection engrossed too much of the Apostles' time ; and secondly, because a murmuring had arisen between the Hellenists and the Hebrews, from a suspicion that the widows of the Jews had been treated with undue liberality. Now as neither of these circumstances can

operate in such societies as ours, a distinct order of men for such purposes cannot be deemed necessary to render us conformable to the apostolic churches. But, in fact, it is our constant usage to set apart a certain number of the laity for assisting at the communion, and providing the elements; managing the charitable fund, and administering the other temporal affairs of the congregation. Even our mode of relieving the poor is regulated by scripture precedent, "Concerning the collection for the saints," says St. Paul, "upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him." The persons among whom these weekly contributions were distributed, were widows and orphans, or old and helpless poor in general; and such are the classes of paupers among whom our alms are dispensed.

With respect to discipline or the authority of a church over its members, a subject which has occasioned so much turbulence, cruelty, and petty persecution in the world, it is such a stranger to many of our societies, that, I suppose, the idea is perfectly new; because we walk by scripture rules, which are extremely simple on this point. In case any member should become so scandalously vicious or refractory as to bring disgrace or disorder upon the congregation, and prove irreclaimable by admonition and exhortation, the direction of Christ, which is repeated by Paul, is most clear and precise. It is simply to expel or disown the offender; and this is the full extent of scriptural excommunication—a punishment which all societies, civil or religious, have a right to inflict. As to any authority of churches over each other, we disclaim it altogether, as having no foundation in scripture. Except those regulations as to dress and behaviour at public worship, which are purely local and temporary, we find no directions with which our practice does not entirely accord; nor are there any ceremonies or forms observed by us which did not make part of the primitive worship. Paul desires only that all things be done decently and in order. From the silence of the sacred writers upon this head, some have drawn a most unwarrantable conclusion: that modern Christians have a right to multiply ceremonies according to their fancy, and to impose the observance of them upon others, which would open the door to

every degree of folly and extravagance, superstition and tyranny. But a candid reader of the New Testament will, I think, be of opinion, that no addition should be made to the practice of the apostolic churches; or if any, only such as are necessary to the decent and orderly conduct of the service of God; and that no duty is more peremptorily inculcated, than mutual forbearance in cases of this nature.

It is also manifest that public prayers were offered, according to the abilities of the ministers, and the circumstances of the congregation, without the assistance of any prescribed form; and "that they made melody in their hearts with psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs." From the example of Christ and of his apostles, whose discourses abound in the book of their acts; and also from the copious instructions of Paul to Timothy and Titus, it is moreover evident that their sermons dwelt chiefly on holiness and virtue, enforced by the solemn doctrine of a judgment to come, which was demonstrated from the declarations of Christ, and authenticated by his miracles and resurrection.

In regard to the administration of the ordinances, we study to copy the examples that we find in scripture, baptizing in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—not as one and indivisible, equal in eternity, power and glory—but in the name of the Father, who so loved the world as to give his well-beloved Son, that we may live through him; in the name of the Son, because he so loved us as to give himself for us; and in the name of the Holy Spirit, because by the gifts of the spirit the gospel was diffused over the world. We copy the conduct of Jesus at his last supper with the most scrupulous accuracy, even to the singing of a hymn. We maintain the right and duty of every man to present his child for baptism, and to commemorate the death of his Lord. We instruct and exhort, or caution and warn, but we do not presume to search the heart. We "neither judge our brother, nor set at nought our brother." We say not, "stand by thyself, for we are holier than thou;" but rather "eat ye *all* of this bread, drink ye *all* of this cup." According to Luke, (c. xxii. v. 21) Judas was present when these words were spoken. What minister then is holier than Jesus? What communicant more unworthy than Judas? Lastly,

in the conclusion of prayer, and the dismissal of the congregation, we use the same doxologies, and the same forms of blessing that were dictated by the Apostles themselves, and no others.

A truly pious Christian of whatsoever communion should be glad to hear of such communities, with which he can worship in godly quietness, without distraction of spirit; free from having his devotions interrupted by unintelligible mysteries, blasphemous expressions, and intolerant creeds.

We are well assured, that great numbers of all persuasions concur in our opinions, and rejoice in our progress. If *they* would shake off the yoke of bondage, we should soon see true religion flourish, and the Gospel glorified.

The Gospel is a calm, sentimental, practical rule of life. The kingdom of God is within us. It is the reign of love, joy, peace in the holy spirit; but the popular forms of religion are tumultuous and polemical, intolerant and uncharitable. Men have made it subservient to their ambition, vanity and pride, and even to their most malignant passions. A liberal-minded Dissenter may well and reasonably object to frequent any service in which controversial doctrines and superstitious, or unscriptural ceremonies, are mixed up with devotion, though he may have no objection occasionally to hear sermons on disputed points, and to judge of the truth of the doctrine and the force of the argument; for his mind should always be open to conviction; and it is his principle "to prove all things, and hold fast by that which is true." But no Christian can justly object to be present at our worship; for we scrupulously avoid the introduction of any disputable tenets into our devotional exercises, as most unbecoming and presumptuous in addresses to the Deity, as well as unsuitable to that frame of mind with which prayer should be made; and an imposition on those who cannot concur in such petitions or professions. While we adhere to our present practice, our churches are built upon a rock. If we deviate from it in the slightest instance, we build them upon the sand, liable to be overthrown by the winds and the floods, or the silent and deceitful lapse of conformity and fashion. We could then neither blame the episcopal church for claiming authority to appoint rites and ceremonies at

will, nor object to the theatrical exhibition of High Mass. There is no more warrant in scripture for the Trinity than for Transubstantiation, nay less; nor for consecrating ground, than for making Holy Water.

We maintain, not only, that the Bible is an infallible rule of *Faith*; but also, that it contains a rule of *Order* in sacred things, adapted to every state of the church; and that it is both more respectful, and more conducive to harmony and concord, to conform and adhere to the practice of the Apostles, than to follow human inventions, and veer about with every wind of fashion. This we can do without asserting the divine right of Presbytery. The scriptural Presbytery was congregational, similar to our Session, which consists of the Minister and Elders of one congregation. In the apostolic times churches were widely scattered, so that their Presbyters could not assemble for any purpose. Our Presbyteries consist of the ministers and elders of neighbouring congregations, who unite for the superintendence of the conduct and studies of candidates for the ministry, and the care of vacant congregations, and in general for mutual advice and assistance; but disclaim any pretensions to the exercise of ecclesiastical power.

Such are the principles and practice of the Remonstrant Synod, the Presbytery of Antrim, and the Synod of Munster. These form a body determined to maintain their liberty, and strenuously labouring for the emancipation of their brethren. For the first object we depend on none but ourselves, for the latter we must look to others. It is their concern more than ours. This is a great crisis. "Brethren ye are called unto liberty, to the glorious liberty of the children of God." "Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." The gospel is the law of liberty: "Stand fast, therefore, in that liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free, and be not entangled in the yoke of bondage."

I shall now address a few words, in conclusion, to those friends who still behold our conflict from a distance, to those of our brethren, whether Presbyterian or Episcopalian, who are convinced of the truth and value of our principles, but still continue to profess their unscriptural faith, and practice their superstitious worship; preferring the praise of men to the approbation of God and their own consciences, and sacrificing all on the altar of a hypocritical uniformity.

I beseech them to consider how they can reconcile it to their consciences as moral beings, to their faith as Christians, to their feelings as men of truth and honour, to stand up in the presence of the Almighty, the searcher of hearts, who requireth truth in our inmost parts, to whom the prayer of the hypocrite is an abomination, and call upon him to accept of prayers in which they do not believe, assent to creeds which they reprobate, and make them subjects of reproach and ridicule; and comply with ceremonies which they know to be unauthorised by Christ or his apostles. How can they answer for such duplicity and hypocrisy to their children, their relatives, and their friends, who are privy to their insincerity. Do they not feel lowered and humbled in the estimation of all enlightened and conscientious men; shackled and priest-ridden in the presence of those generous and liberal spirits who have shaken off the yoke, who can walk at large, avow their opinions, and glory in the progress of genuine religion. Some affect to consider these things as indifferent, or matters of little importance; but sincerity is not a matter of indifference. It is the soul of religion, the main-spring of a virtuous life; the only quality that can render our services acceptable in the sight of God. It is not an affair of little importance to offer hypocritical addresses to the Deity, and to give assent to impious falsehoods: to yield to impositions on Christian liberty, and to give their countenance and sanction to the authority by which they are imposed on the free-born followers of the Lord Jesus.

“I hear a voice from heaven, saying, come out from among them, O my people, lest ye become partakers of their sins.” *REVELATION 18:4* NEMO.

COME AND SEE.

Or, the duty of Judging before Condemning.

(Concluded from page 464.)

Having stated that it is the duty of those who dislike our sentiments with respect to God and the Saviour, to ascertain what our sentiments really are before they condemn, we now proceed to our opinions respecting the character, duty and destiny of man.

They say that our preaching on this subject is moral preaching. This is thought to be a reproach; but before they condemn us, let them come and see what this morality is, which is considered so dangerous to the soul. The morality which we preach and hear is not heathen morality—not our duty, as it is understood by those who never have been enlightened by the gospel; not merely the duties we owe to society, of justice, kindness and truth; not merely the duties we owe ourselves, of prudence, care, and self-improvement; it includes also in its broad circle, the duties of love, confidence, heavenly-mindedness, and prayer, which we owe to our Father in heaven. Thus this preaching covers the whole ground of christian duty, including not only actions, but the principles and feelings that govern human actions. If it concerned itself with conduct only, there might be some reason for saying, that, weighed in the balances it would be found wanting; for the heart is the source of holiness as well as of sin; and our religion teaches us to look to the heart as the fountain-head, and when it is corrupt, to cast in a branch from the tree of life to heal the bitter waters. But at the same time our religion teaches us that the deeds are essential, because they show the state of the heart; so essential, that ‘God shall render to every man according to his deeds;’ so essential, that ‘they that have done good shall come to the resurrection of life;’ so essential, that our Saviour, in his sermon on the mount, that perfect summary of our religion, said, without one word of what are now called essential doctrines, ‘Who-soever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, who built his house upon a rock.’

But it is said that the word morality is not commonly thought to include so much; it is applied to men of regular habits and decent conduct, who neither have, nor pretend to have religious feelings; therefore to call our preaching moral, gives the impression that it is not serious, deep-toned nor awakening. It certainly does; but who calls it moral preaching? If we gave it that name, it would be a different thing; but we do not; that name is given by those who dislike our sentiments; it is given in reproach; it gives *their* impression, no doubt, but it is not a correct impression; we will

not say that we preach morality, because we know it would be misunderstood ; we say that we preach and hear christian duty—the great duty of love to God and man. Let it be remembered, that this name is given to our preaching, not by those who hear it—not by those who have the means of knowing what it is ; it is given by those who do not hear it ; who are not willing that others should hear it ; and who, if they did hear it, would listen with a jealous suspicion, which would prevent their judging impartially. Those who come, will find that we preach all the duties of the gospel, and all the doctrines of the gospel ; not certainly all the doctrines which others find in the gospel ; for unless *we* find them there, no man can undertake to say that it is our duty to preach them. We do not say that we preach morality ; because, true as it is, it has given a wrong impression ; but that wrong impression has not been made by our preaching, nor by any name applied to it by ourselves.

It is probable, however, that others, when they give this name to our preaching, mean that we do not attempt to inspire religious feeling ; that we lay all stress on religious conduct, without regard to religious affections. Let them come, and they will see that this charge cannot possibly be true ; for we hold that there can be no such thing as consistently religious conduct without religious feeling ; that the religious conduct will be earnest and devoted, in exact proportion as the religious feeling grows fervent and high ; and therefore we labour to inspire religious affections, because without them, men can never be what Christianity was meant to make them. But we urge men to cherish such feelings as are constant and self-sustained, and not to rely upon rising and falling emotions. We desire to see these affections appear, not in sudden and momentary flashes, but burning with the steady brightness of a lamp to the feet. There may be some, who fear lest religious feeling shall run into excess. It is not so with us ; we know, that there can be no excess in true religious feeling ; however fast, however far it goes, it will confine itself to the strait and narrow path of duty. When we dwell on the unbounded love of God—a love, which all the thanklessness of man has never chilled ; on the glorious self-devotion of his Son, whose love

was stronger than death, for those who were no friends to him; when we remember all that their unrequited love has done for our happiness, for our improvement and salvation, we trust that some answering chord of gratitude is struck, some feeling is excited in every heart that is not stone.

But it is so manifestly impossible for any religion to exist without religious feeling, that when they charge us with preaching morality only, they may mean that we do not insist upon the duty of devotion. Let them come and see. They will find that we represent prayer as the breath of life to the christian; that the child can as well say that he loves his parent while he always shuns his presence, as the Christian profess to be faithful without communion with God. They will find that we urge upon all men the duty of prayer in the sanctuary, of prayer in retirement, of prayer at the family altar; and those who do not pray, cannot say that our faith allows, excuses, or defends their neglect of duty. It is true, that we do not consider all prayer as devotion; we think that prayer should be fervent rather than long, and that devotion should be calmly breathed from the depths of the soul. It is true that we have little confidence in the piety of those who neglect their active duties for the sake of multiplied devotions, for such incense is not acceptable to the Most High; but if any think that we do not teach and impress the duty of prayer, let them come and see that, however it may be with ourselves, our faith is not wanting; it insists on holy lips and holy lives; but it judges of the devotion by the life rather than of the life by the devotion.

They say that we make light of sin and of the change which Christianity requires. Do we indeed deny the depravity of man? Let them come and see if it is so. They will find that we represent the world as sunk in wickedness; the hearts of the guilty are steeped in it, and we find its defacing stains in the best human hearts; we behold the great family of man in a state which is awful to every one who cares for the welfare of his race—a state which would fill the heart with despair, were it not for the power of Christianity. No one can think of the great world, trodden with armies, ground by oppression, darkened with ignorance, and red with sin; no one can think of any single heart whose best purpo-

ses are so often overborne by temptation, whose best thoughts find it so hard to struggle upwards into life and action, without the conviction that 'if we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves;' and every Christian thinks with sorrow and shame of his own transgressions, his thoughtlessness, his indifference to eternity, and his ingratitude to God. Such is the state of man. But what are we to do? Are we to sit down to inquire how and whence this depravity came, or are we to arise and endeavour to remove it? When we see the conflagration spreading from house to house, and from street to street, are we to inquire how and by whom it was kindled, or should we exert ourselves to extinguish it? The Gospel contains the injunction of our duty. It tells but incidentally, how and whence this depravity came, while it tells us plainly, repeatedly, and as if it were its main object to tell us, how it may be done away. All this is confirmed by our Saviour's example; he did not give his hearers the history of sin; he was too diligently employed in taking away the sin of the world.

Having this mistaken impression that we make light of sin, it is but natural for them to suppose that we are not aware of the greatness of the change necessary to bring men to the holiness of the Gospel. Let them come and see. They will find that we represent that change as so great that it is compared in Scripture to a new birth; instead of being called a change in the life, it is spoken of as beginning life anew. When one who has been guilty, repents, and is renewed in the spirit of his mind; when one who has never heard of Christ, listens to the glad tidings of salvation at last, and welcomes the sound with rapture to his heart; when the child with the dew of his youth still upon him, begins to think deeply and seriously of God,—each begins life anew; it is the greatest of all possible changes; it is passing from a life which ends at the grave to one that never ends: it is as if the corruptible were already putting on incorruption, and the mortal immortality. When the heart has been long and firmly bound to the world, the conversion will generally be sudden; the bands of sin must be cut asunder at a blow; there is no hope of him who trifles, delays, and falters. But whether the conversion is sudden or slow, it is only a beginning; it does not bring them at once to the perfect

stature of the christian, and if they count themselves to have attained, they are in danger of presumption. When the good seed has been sown in ground fitted to receive it, 'first appears the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear;' in all husbandry, a long series of patient industry must pass before the harvest is gathered in; the plants which spring up to their full growth rapidly will wither because they have no depth of earth, while those which are cultivated aright will keep growing till the harvest, which is the end of the world, and the reapers of which are the angels.

Those who come will find that we consider it essential to pass through the change of heart and life which makes one a christian. No one believes that we are born holy; no one thinks that any human being comes into life with the Christian character formed. We are born into an animal life, where the influences that act upon us are those of the senses and passions. Christianity would have us born anew into a spiritual life, that we may live, not according to the flesh and its impulses, but according to the affections and principles of that religion which teaches us that we are immortal. The human heart resembles the soil of the garden; if it is cultivated, it will reward the hand of labour with its harvest of fruits and flowers; if neglected, it will be covered with useless and perhaps with poisonous verdure. So the heart cannot be left to itself; the same neglect which would change the paradise into a desert, would assuredly make the heart of man a waste and desolate ruin. It was never meant to be left to itself; it is made over in childhood to the care of parents that they may be the means under God of giving this spiritual life to their children; but till the religious character is formed in young or old, they are children of the world—with hopes and feelings which never look beyond the world. Since it is the object of christianity to make us feel and act as children of God, and this change cannot begin too soon, God has called us early, and early should we seek his face. He has ordained that those to whom the child is indebted for life should be the parents of his immortal life also. When he wonders why they bow with reverence before a presence which he cannot see; and they give him the first knowledge of his heavenly Father; when they lead him to sweet and

sacred thoughtfulness by the simple story or the plaintive hymn; then perhaps that change is beginning which will make him a Christian in this life, and number him with the blessed in another: they may not observe his progress, but it may result in that conversion which the gospel regards as the beginning of the christian life in the soul.

Those who come, may find that we consider the change itself the important thing; and therefore regard, less perhaps than some other sects, the accidental circumstances that may have attended it. The great question is, has the heart been turned to God? if so, we care less for an answer to the question, when and where was it so converted? It is a momentous thing to ascertain whether this change has taken place in the soul; and the scripture has left no uncertainty in a matter of so great importance. It teaches us that 'every one that doeth righteousness is born of God;' and by this it means, not the righteousness of a heathen nor a Jew, but the righteousness of a sincere and heavenly-minded christian. If we see a man whose life and conversation declare that he holds communion with God and finds pleasure in the acts and inspirations of devotion; whose light shines round, in his kindness to the miserable, his sympathy with the happy, and the benevolence which he feels for all; if we see him consistent in his righteousness, and faithful through all the joys and sorrows of his life, we have no need to ask farther questions; we have no doubt that his heart is turned to God; we should no more deny him to be a Christian, because he could not tell the precise moment of his conversion, than we should deny him to be a human being, because he could not tell when and where he was born.

Another charge against our sentiments is, that they encourage men to believe that they can be saved by their own merits and works alone. This is never said by any who have heard our preaching or read our writings with candour; if there are any who believe it, let them come and see if any such doctrine is taught by those who profess our opinions. They will find that our belief on the subject is precisely the same as that expressed in the words, 'By grace ye are saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.' We are not so unacquainted with human nature; we are

not such strangers to human sin ; we are not so ignorant of our own unworthiness, as to use such a word as human merit in the presence of God. We know that salvation is absolutely and entirely a gift of love ; the world had done nothing to deserve it ; it is a gift infinitely transcending the loftiest deserving of man. So far from holding this belief ourselves, we do not believe it possible that any man in his right mind ever regarded everlasting happiness as nothing more than the just and reasonable reward of human merit and exertion ; it is against nature ; if any are charged with it, they must be misunderstood. But whatever others believe, our faith on this subject is, that man is entirely indebted for salvation to the mercy of God through Jesus Christ his Son ; to this, and to this alone.

But they say, we preach that a man must work out his own salvation. That same doctrine was preached before we preached it, by one who certainly was well acquainted with the doctrines and duties of Christianity. But let them come and see what is meant by it ; it is a scripture phrase, and before they say that we use it improperly, let them listen to our explanation. Subsistence is the gift of God, but man must work out his own subsistence ; he must prepare the ground, he must sow the seed, he must gather the harvest. But does he conceive himself less indebted to the kindness of his God ? Does he think that if bread was supplied to him so that he need not labour at all, it would be better for his health, for his character, for his improvement ? So far from it he knows that it is the kindness of God which imposes the necessity of labour upon him, and that it is done for his own good. In the same manner and for the same reason, God has required men to labour for their own salvation ; they must inquire into the nature, study the language, acquire the habits, and form the character suited to that heavenly country to which they hope to go. They must make that preparation to enjoy it, without which the gift would lose its value. That God has imposed this necessity on man, so far from lessening our gratitude for his goodness, only makes us feel yet more deeply, that salvation is a gift of glorious and unbounded love.

But they ask if we say that men are not unprofitable servants. They are not profitable to God as one man

can be profitable to another, but they may be profitable to themselves. 'Is it any pleasure to the Almighty, that thou art righteous?' What can he gain by the best obedience of men? But it must be remembered that to be unprofitable is one thing, and to be unfaithful is another; and we cannot allow that because our obedience is unprofitable to God, it is a matter of small importance whether or not we are faithful in duty. We may resort to the beautiful illustration which unlocks all the mysteries of the gospel, we may ask if a child's fidelity to his parents' instruction, can ever repay the debt of gratitude he owes for a parent's love? can the child say, that by obedience he has discharged his obligations for that love which watched for him when he was sleeping, which his coldness and ingratitude could never alter? No! though his obedience is not profitable to his father, it is the best proof he can give of his grateful affection; without it he is worthless; though his best obedience, so far from giving him a claim to new rewards, does not repay what he has received from his father's hands. So it is with the children of God. Important as their obedience is, we do not believe that it discharges the debt of gratitude which they already owe; still less do we believe that they can establish upon it any farther claim to his favours or rewards.

But they say that we do not speak of works as they are spoken of in the scriptures. Let them come and see. The scriptures do indeed speak slightly of *works*; but we have never seen the passage where they speak thus of *good works*. The works which they condemned were the fasts, ceremonies, and sacrifices, which many of the Jews relied upon, even after they had become Christians; they answered precisely to the works by which some mistaken Christians at the present day, hope, without obedience, to gain the favour of God. By such works of hollow and formal sanctity—works not done from any religious feeling,—no flesh could be justified. But the language used respecting good works was very different; it was the design of Christianity to make men 'zealous of good works;' our Saviour charged his disciples to let men see their good works, in order to induce them to glorify the heavenly Father. This distinction has not been properly regarded; we endeavour to regard it; we remember how sternly it

was said, 'your new moons, your calling of assemblies, I cannot away with: it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting;' on such works we counsel none to rely; but we remember that it was said at the same time, 'put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well.' These good works we earnestly recommend and enjoin, not because they can merit salvation—not because they can establish a claim on the Most High; but because we are told that they who love the Father will keep his commands; and these good works are important, because they are the only substantial proof we can give of our love to God.

There is yet another charge—they say that we remove all fears of the future; let them come and see if it is so. We certainly endeavour to move men by dwelling on the goodness of God, because it is that goodness, which, we are assured, 'leadeth to repentance.' We use persuasive rather than alarming language, because we do not wish to see men starting up in sudden fright as if awakened by the midnight fire-bell; and herein we follow the example of him who said, 'knowing the terrors of the Lord we persuade men;' it is not because we believe there are no terrors, but because we think it better to draw men to obedience with bands of love. If we went so far as to deny that men have any need to fear, there would be more reason for the charge; but it is not so; we see and lament the freedom from uneasiness which every where prevails; every where we say, because we do not admit the genuineness of that earnestness which is lighted by the flame of party; we shall therefore still endeavour to win men to Christ by the persuasion of gentleness and love.

But this is not all; they think we teach that no man has anything to fear in the future world; in other words, that all will be happy as soon as they pass over the boundary of the grave. If we believed that doctrine, we should avow it; but there is no shadow of reason for saying that we believed, except that we do not say that those who believe it are not Christians. Their opinions are their own; we are to answer only for ours. But we do not agree in any single point of doctrine with those who teach that all the suffering occasioned by sin ends in the present world. We think that when

a man enters another life, he enters it in the state of moral improvement or moral guilt, in which he departed from this world. We know of no pleasures there which the guilty can enjoy; we know of nothing there which can drown the feeling of uneasiness and pain; we know of no sleep in which they can forget their sorrows; therefore we think they must be miserable, unless they are greatly changed by passing through the grave. Of such a change we see no intimation—no evidence whatever. They will leave their bodies in the grave, but their sins must go with them, because their sins are in the soul; the body can no more sin than any other clay; it is the soul which sins, and which must suffer if it is guilty. We reproach no other sect when we say that we believe that the judgment is not here, but after death; there, every man shall receive according to his deeds—they that have done good shall come to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of despair.

But they say that if we believe not this, we believe in the final restoration of all to heaven; that if there is suffering in the future world, it will have an end at last. Let them come and see. If we believed that doctrine we should declare it, for we have never learned to be ashamed of any sincere convictions. But we do not believe in the restoration of all the guilty, because we do not find it taught in the scriptures. If we considered the punishment inflicted by God, we might believe that it would pass away; but we regard it as self-inflicted; men are free both in choice and action, and they bring this misery on themselves against the counsel and warning of God. We believe it to be the unalterable order of nature, that happiness shall be produced by goodness, and that misery shall follow sin. These consequences are before us; if we choose to sin, we choose to suffer. When a child is told by his father that if he does wrong he will suffer, he has no right to say that his father inflicts the punishment which he suffers; nor do we believe that the punishment of sin is any more directly inflicted by our God,

Men can never, in this world or another, be happy without being good. We do not say that all men will not be finally happy, but we find no assurance that they

will. This, however, is a subject on which we do not enlarge; we leave it where the gospel left it; we do not try to lift the awful, deep and heavy veil which hangs over the eternal world. We use the words of scripture; we dictate to no one what meaning he shall give them; we leave all to the Most High, knowing that the guilty will suffer all that is just and nothing more than is just; we consider it our duty rather to warn men to fly from the wrath to come.

Such are some of the points in which we have been misunderstood. When there are so many proofs that we have been misunderstood, we call upon other Christians to come and see, that they may not so mistake us. We think it is but a reasonable demand. It was said even before the prejudiced Hebrew council, 'Doth our law judge any man before it hear him?' let the candour of the Christian be at least equal to that of the Jew. We cannot trust the report of any thing which we hear, after it has passed through the lips of one or two; how then is it possible to judge fairly by report, of the opinions of a religious party?

We lament that we must use that word religious party; we lament that Christians should be armed against each other; but we can see no end to disunion, till all admit that men are answerable for their sentiments to God and to God alone. We should make it our endeavour to know the truth—not what others say is truth, but what we find is truth in the scriptures; and we should hold ourselves ready at any moment to give up our present sentiments, if we find that the scripture does not sustain them. We would endeavour to keep an open heart; and if there are any opinions which bring better evidence than ours—any, that have a stronger tendency to produce true love to God and man—any that have more power to make bad men good and good men better—then may our system perish, whatever feelings may be wounded by its fall! may all the pages in which it is engrossed be scattered to the winds of heaven! may every vestige of it sink, and be found no more forever!

Intelligence.

UNITARIANISM IN ABERDEEN.

On the 13th October, the Rev. Archibald Macdonald, at the request of the Scottish Unitarian Christian Association, preached three discourses in Aberdeen, in illustration and defence of the Oneness and universal benevolence of God. He was listened to with deepest attention with crowded audiences in the large hall of the Royal Hotel. In the evening, thousands could not gain admission. Every exertion was made by the clergy of the city, to prevent his preaching again, but the "Broad Hill" of Aberdeen was not within their bigoted dominion, and there he addressed thousands, on Sunday October 20. At the urgent entreaty of numbers he stayed another Sunday, and having obtained Cook's Riding-school, preached to crowded audiences, and also on Thursday evening, Oct. 31. A society has been formed. Most interesting are the particulars of the introduction of Christian Unitarianism into that large city. In our next Number we hope to enter into a full detail, and, in addition, to insert Mr. Harris's report, who, it is hoped, will spend two Sabbaths in Aberdeen in the course of December.

Christian Pioneer.

ORDINATION.—On Tuesday, the 17th inst., the Rev. Jas. Mulligan was ordained, as assistant and successor to the Rev. Thomas Alexander, in the Remonstrant Congregation of Cairncastle. At this first ordination, among the Remonstrant body, the Rev. Mr. Campbell, of Templepatrick, preached an appropriate sermon from 2d Tim, iv. 3, 4:—"For the time will come, when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts, shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." From these words, he ably depicted the early introduction of corruptions into the church of Christ, and the unwillingness of many, in our own times, to attend to "wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ," exemplified the manner in which the teaching both of our Lord, and his Apostles, has been rejected among us, while many have turned unto fables. The Rev. Mr. Glendy, of Ballycarry, then proceeded,—in a very eloquent and impressive manner, to explain and vindicate Presbyterian ordination, and congratulated the Congregation, on the appointment of a person to the work of the Ministry, among them, who, untrammelled by the fetters of human invention, was left at liberty to explain the word of God, according to the dictates of his own conscience, without "the fear of man, which bringeth a snare," and concluded the solemn services of the day, by an appropriate address to the newly ordained Minister and his flock. After the services of the day were finished, the Presbytery and other Ministers, present on the occasion, sat down to a most excellent dinner, at which we were happy to observe many persons of respectability, from all the other religious denominations in the neighbourhood exemplifying that Christian liberality which has always prevailed in this part of the country.—The evening was

spent in the greatest harmony and good feeling, much instruction being afforded by several excellent observations, made by the speakers, who addressed the meeting; particularly on the cheering prospects of the great cause of religious freedom and truth, which the Remonstrant body have so ably supported. We congratulate the Congregation of Cairncastle, on their unanimity on the choice of a Minister, as in common with all who have an intimate knowledge of Mr. Mulligan, we anticipate the happiest results from this settlement.

REV. MR. BAGOT.—This gentleman is well known to the Irish public as a zealous champion for the doctrine of the Trinity. His zeal however occasionally outruns his discretion for a time; and when, at length, discretion resumes her sway, a ludicrous inconsistency is observable between former ardour and present backwardness. Thus when Mr. Mitchell, of Newry, commenced the admirable and most useful series of articles in defence of Unitarianism, which appeared in the Bible Christian, nothing could exceed the eagerness of Mr. Bagot to break a lance with this redoubted paladin. He petitioned by letter under his hand, for leave to enter the lists of controversy in the pages of our magazine; and his numerous partizans augured no less than the immediate downfall of Unitarianism, if the gallant assailant were permitted to commence his attack in the very heart of the heretical citadel. The conductors of the Bible Christian granted Mr. Bagot his request. They promised to insert any temperate article he might forward in reply to Mr. Mitchell. Mr. M. expressed himself as highly gratified by this decision, and he and the conductors, and the Unitarians, and the Trinitarians of the north were all on tiptoe, in eager expectation of the promised communication from Mr. Bagot. But month passed away after month, and none arrived.—Not a word of apology; no request for delay; no explanation of his long protracted silence. In short, not one sentence ever appeared on the subject from the pen of Mr. Bagot. Zeal had prompted him to seek the encounter, and he sought it; but discretion, though late, regained her ascendant, and in obedience to her powerful suggestions the champion made a hasty and inglorious retrograde: retreated without beat of drum; *relicta non bene parmula!* Some months after this occurrence Mr. Bagot happened to be in Dublin during a meeting of the Irish Unitarian Christian Society; and by accident, or design, was present at the anniversary. He listened, with remarkable patience and forbearance to the addresses of the different speakers until a late hour in the evening. But shortly before the witching hour of midnight,—when it might be supposed that most of the speakers had withdrawn from the place, —when the business of the meeting had actually terminated,—and a second chairman had been chosen in order to return thanks to the first, and had taken the chair for that purpose,—the Zeal of Mr. Bagot could no longer be restrained. He rose and delivered a speech, which may or may not have been previously prepared for the occasion; but which certainly bore little reference either to the actual business of the day, or the sentiments advanced in the previous addresses. If Mr. Bagot expected to escape without an answer on the spot, he was mistaken. He was answered, and we have reason

to think satisfactorily answered, on the spur of the instant by a Reverend Gentleman who is ever ready and willing as well as able to give a reason of the hope that is in him—the Rev. Fletcher Blakely. The writer of this notice has conversed with several of those who heard the speech and the reply ; and has found but one opinion, that nothing could be more able, clear and convincing than the latter. Several of them have expressed their regret that an argument so comprehensive and brief could not be reported owing to the unprecedented circumstances in which it was delivered ; as it appeared well calculated to advance the cause of Unitarianism in many quarters where its principles are misunderstood and its foundations unexamined. In the course of his address Mr. Bagot had thrown out something that sounded like a challenge to a public discussion of the doctrine of the Trinity. This was promptly taken up by another gentleman who declared himself willing to meet Mr. Bagot on the question at any time and place he might appoint : “ *and God defend the right !* ” But the sample which was afforded by Mr. Blakely of the strength and cogency with which a Unitarian advocate can argue, seemed to have damped his *Zeal* for the time and recalled slumbering *discretion* to her post. *He took no farther notice of the challenge or its acceptance* until his return to Newry, when he is understood to have given to his Trinitarian friends a full account of the former, viz. *his own challenge* : omitting, however, all reference to the latter : viz. *the acceptance of that challenge by the Secretary to the Society*. When that gentleman wrote to him in the name of the Committee, again inviting him to a public discussion of the question, *he declined the contest*, unless it should be carried on in a manner which would have rendered it frivolous and useless. He proposed that a reply should be published by the Society, within six months, to his own pamphlet on the Trinity, which had been published some months before, and to which—forgetting the dissection and anatomy practised upon it by his neighbour, Mr. Mitchel, he was pleased to say that “ *no answer* ” had been given. No answer given ! Why every argument in it had been overthrown, torn to pieces, and scattered to the winds ! No answer given ! Why the trinitarians themselves who read the reply confessed the untenableness of his positions ; all men saw that he was answered ; nay, what is more, that he was *silenced*. It is difficult to believe that even parental partiality could so blind Mr. Bagot’s eyes to the lameness of his offspring. However, to this “ *unanswered* ” pamphlet, as the author was pleased to consider it, Mr. Bagot proposed that the Unitarian Society should publish a formal reply in six months ; that to this reply he should publish a rejoinder in six months more ; that the Unitarian Society was then to have six months to get ready a replication ; to which in the same space he would prepare a counter-replication ; and thus the work was to proceed by way of rebutters and sur-rebutters, pleas and counterpleas, at the rate of one publication from each party in a twelvemonth, until the advocates and readers on both sides should be satisfied *or dead* ; the latter contingency being most probably that which would have soonest occurred. Now if the challenge discovered more *zeal than discretion*, this mode of getting out of it displayed infinitely *more discretion than zeal*. We wonder how Mr.

Bagot, who professes to hold the reception of the Athanasian Creed essential to salvation, could consent to postpone to so distant a date as his plan contemplated, the production of his irrefragable arguments in its defence. His proposal shows marvellously small concern for the souls of those unfortunate Unitarians who might die before his final rejoinder was to come out; and who would, of course, perish everlastingly; but who might have been saved, if Mr. Bagot had not objected to the labour of composing more than one pamphlet in a twelvemonth! Thus has this gentleman proceeded in his vacillating course; giving challenges and abandoning them; getting into scrapes and getting out of them; just as the *ardour of zeal*, or the *coolness of discretion* happened to predominate.

We were not therefore surprised to see it announced that a sermon would be preached by Mr. Bagot, in the Parish Church of Belfast, in the beginning of *December*; the subject of which, as stated in the advertisement, was to be "*the Deity of Christ*:" Neither were we in the least astonished to see immediately afterwards a second advertisement *postponing* the discourse till the first Sunday of *January*. We were not surprized at the former announcement; for we knew Mr. Bagot's *zeal* for his favourite doctrine: we were not unprepared for the latter; for we had some samples of his *discretion*.—The first Sunday of January, however, is approaching and we presume that after what we have now stated, Mr. Bagot will carry his purposes into effect. He will hardly venture either to postpone still farther his discourse, or to alter his subject. We shall endeavour to make ourselves acquainted with the manner in which Mr. Bagot will handle this important and arduous question. It is to be hoped he will bring forward arguments more cogent than are to be found in his "*unanswered*" pamphlet. But as our object has been and is, to procure a thorough discussion of whatever topics are embraced within the scope of this miscellany, we hereby promise to insert Mr. Bagot's discourse *entire*, if he will favour us with it in manuscript; accompanying it, of course, with such observations as its contents may seem to require; and if his reasonings are so clear and convincing as to preclude the possibility of a satisfactory reply, we shall freely and candidly admit them to be, in our opinion, "*unanswerable*." This offer we make to Mr. Bagot in perfect sincerity; and we trust he will consider it as at least worthy of his attention. He will doubtless perceive that if his object be to wean men from Unitarian tenets, he can hardly expect to find a more suitable vehicle for his arguments than the Bible Christian, which circulates largely among the Unitarians of Ireland: and if he thinks he can save them from a fatal heresy, he will surely be disposed to take the most effectual measures for the purpose.

OBITUARY.

DIED, at his residence in Belfast, on Sunday, October 13th, 1835, the Rev. Robert Orr, Presbyterian Minister of Killead. His father was a respectable country gentleman, in the vicinity of Strabane, and held for many years the office of Deputy Sheriff for the County of Tyrone. Mr. Orr, therefore, had all the advantages of a good education ; and was well known by his intimate acquaintances to be an excellent scholar. He became pastor of Killead in the year 1786, and, through infirm health, resigned the active duties of his charge, in the year 1826. Mr. Orr was a rational, pleasing, instructive preacher. His sermons contained much matter, and his devotional exercises were particularly interesting. His religious views were decidedly Unitarian, and he never kept them back, either in public or in private. The great change unfavourable to religious liberty, which occurred in the General Synod, subsequently to his retirement from active life, he deeply deplored ; but as he and his assistant entertained different views, he consulted the peace of his congregation by refusing to bring before them the question of a separation from the Synod, though repeatedly urged to do so by many of his most enlightened hearers. His views of the Synod's Overtures are contained in an excellent article published in our pages about three years ago, signed "*An Aged Elder.*"

Mr. Orr was particularly kind to young men coming forward to the ministry ; and he was always distinguished for a polite, liberal and cordial hospitality. Indeed it was in the friendly and domestic circle that his most attractive qualities were peculiarly displayed, diffusing peace and cheerfulness around him. He died in the 74th year of his age, and the 48th of his ministry. His remains were attended to the grave, in Killead, by a very large and respectable body of his former friends and hearers ; and the Rev. Dr. Montgomery, who was educated under his ministry, delivered a funeral address which gave universal satisfaction, and brought tears to many eyes.

NOTICE TO SUBSCRIBERS.

The Managers of the BIBLE CHRISTIAN beg leave to inform their readers and subscribers, that having found the present system of conducting the work both inconvenient to themselves, and in various respects disadvantageous to the publication, they have resigned the superintendence of it to the Rev. J. SCOTT PORTER; by whom it will in future be conducted: and in whose favour they solicit a continuance of that literary aid and public patronage which the BIBLE CHRISTIAN has hitherto received.

Belfast, Dec. 1833.

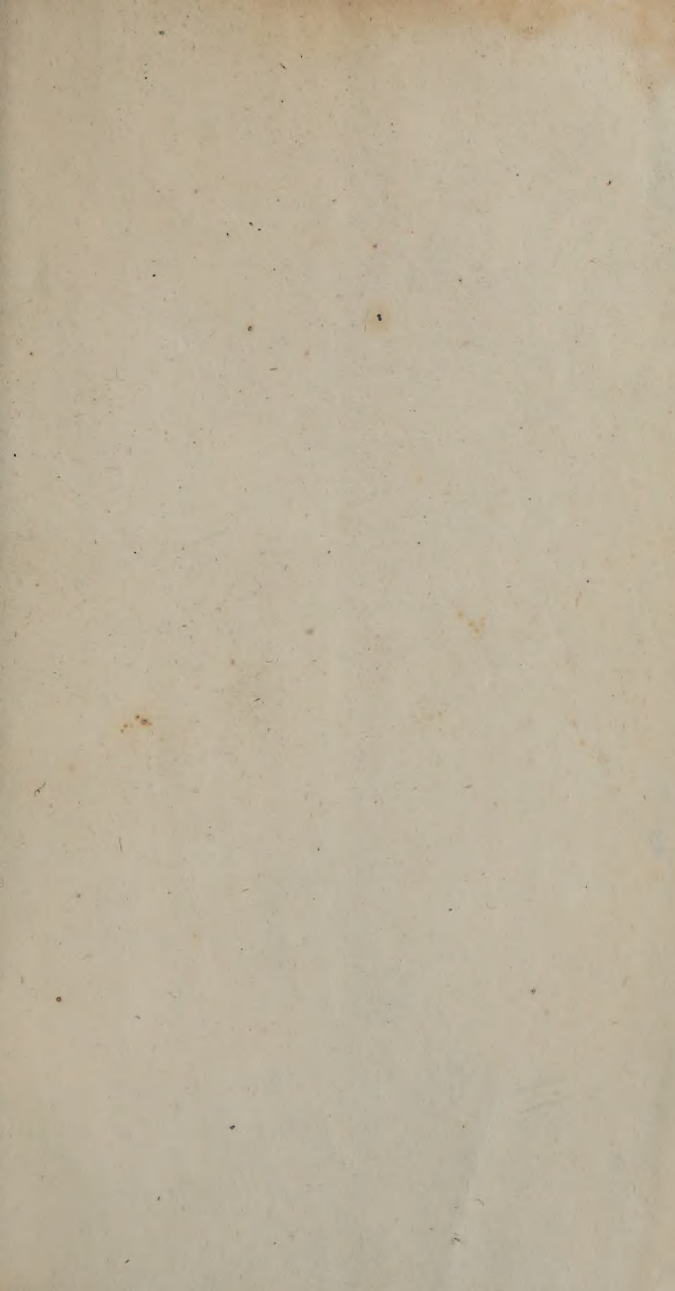
In reference to the foregoing announcement, the Rev. J. SCOTT PORTER begs leave to assure the readers of the BIBLE CHRISTIAN, that no consideration could have induced him to undertake the duty assigned him, had he not felt a conviction that the work is capable of effecting great good; and that to enable it to do so to the full extent of its capability, the undivided superintendence of one responsible Editor is necessary. He conceives that under the direction of one individual, though of humble pretensions, the work may be conducted with greater regularity of plan and unity of purpose, and consequently with greater advantage to the readers and to the public, than has been the case hitherto; and in this hope he has consented to assume its management. Several of the most able contributors to the former series, have already promised him their assistance, and he hopes to be able in a short time to increase their number. His own attention will of course be regularly devoted to the work so long as it continues in his hands. He trusts that by prompt attention to the communications of correspondents, and by care in superintending the printing of those articles that may be selected for publication, he will deserve a continuance of their support, and receive it.

The Subscribers to the Bible Christian are respectfully informed, that the work will be carried on in the same size, and at the same price as formerly; but that a considerable improvement will be made both in the quality of paper and in the typographical execution.

He requests that those persons who intend to subscribe for the new series, will send their names, as soon as may be convenient, to the EDITOR, at MR. J. SMYTH'S Printing-Office, High-street, Belfast; whither Communications and Suggestions respecting the means of improving the work, or extending its usefulness, are to be forwarded.—The first number of the New Series will appear on Thursday, Feb. 6th, 1834.









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